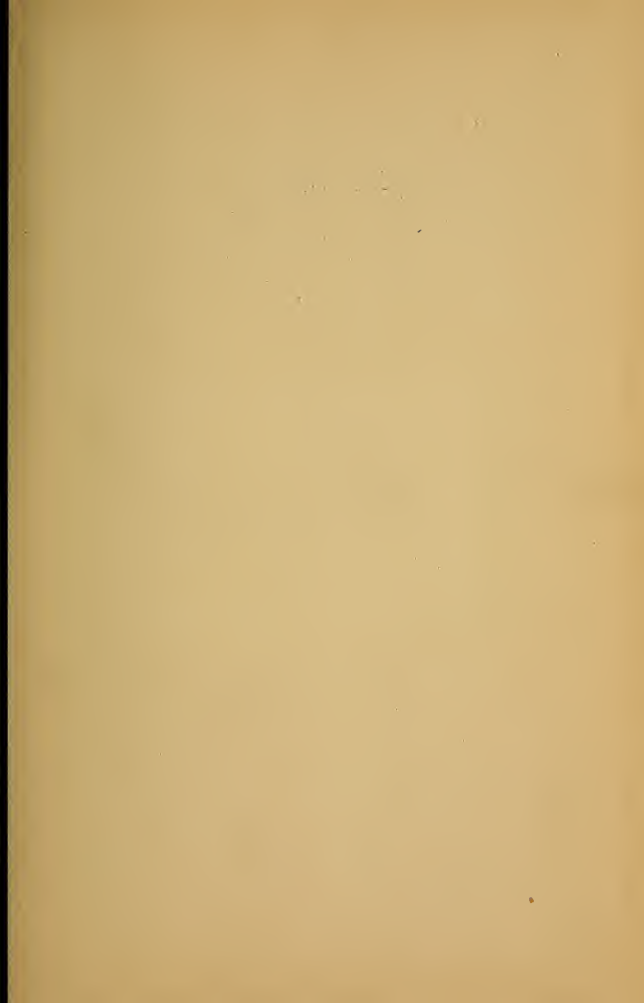


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ILLUSTRATED EXPLANATION
OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

ILLUSTRATED EXPLANATION OF THE COMMANDMENTS.

A COMPLETE AND THOROUGH EXPOSITION OF
THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD AND
OF THE CHURCH.

WITH NUMEROUS EXAMPLES FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE,
THE FATHERS, AND OTHER SOURCES.

ADAPTED FROM THE ORIGINAL OF

REV. H. ROLFUS, D.D.

WITH A REFLECTION AND A PRACTICE ON EACH
COMMANDMENT

By VERY REV. FERREOL GIRARDEY, C.S.S.R.,
*Provincial of the St. Louis Province; author of "Popular
Instructions on Marriage," etc., etc.*



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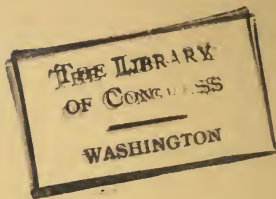
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NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO:
BENZIGER BROTHERS,

Printers to the Holy Apostolic See.

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MICHAEL AUGUSTINE,

Archbishop of New York.

NEW YORK, June 18th, 1897.

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Introduction.

Keeping the Commandments.

ETERNAL salvation does not depend on faith alone, but also in keeping the commandments. Faith teaches us what God is, what He has done for us, and what He has destined us for. But we must also know the will of God, and this will is expressed in His commandments. It is just as necessary for us to keep these commandments as it is to believe in God. "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (St. Matt. vii. 21).

1. From the words of Our Saviour in which He points out the observance of God's commandments as the way leading to eternal life, it is evident that we can keep the commandments, for Our Lord does not exact anything impossible. When the rich young man in the Gospel asked one day, "Good

Master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?" Our Lord gave him the explicit answer: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (St. Matt. xix. 17).

2. It is true that we can only keep the commandments when sustained by the grace of God, but with the help of His grace it is not only possible, but easy for us to keep them. Our Lord Himself assures us: "My yoke is sweet and My burden light" (St. Matt. xi. 30). And St. John the Apostle testifies: "His commandments are not heavy" (1 St. John v. 3).

3. Faith in God and charity are interior, and it is in the heart that they are implanted and nurtured. But it requires a test to prove whether they be genuine and true, or only a sham faith and a sham love without value. Now this test by which we know genuine faith and genuine love is the keeping of the commandments. For this purpose God has given commandments, that not He, but rather man himself may know whether he be of God, and whether faith and love dwell in him.

"And by this we know that we have known Him, if we keep His commandments. He who saith that he knoweth Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But he that keepeth His word, in him in very deed the charity of God is perfected, and by this we know that we are in Him" (1 St. John ii. 3-5).

4. It does not suffice, however, for gaining eternal life to keep one or other, or even the greater number of the commandments, just as it may please us or not. The Christian must keep all the commandments. The Apostle St. James gives us the reason of this when he says:

“Now whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all. For He that said, Thou shalt not commit adultery, said also, Thou shalt not kill” (St. James ii. 10, 11).

Whoever transgresses a single commandment rebels against God. He says: I will keep all the commandments, but this one I do not choose to keep. It is this rebellion against God which constitutes sin.

5. All those texts of Holy Scripture which are supposed to prove that it is impossible to keep the commandments are only in apparent contradiction with the words of Christ. When, for instance, the Apostle says: “To will, is present with me, but to accomplish that which is good, I find not” (Rom. vii. 18), he means, “Unless I am aided by grace,” for he himself says: “I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me” (Phil. iv. 13).

6. Let us imagine what contradictions would necessarily result if man could not keep the commandments: God commands man to do or avoid something under penalty of forfeiting eternal salvation, but man cannot do good, not even with the

help of God's grace. Man, therefore, is obliged to do evil; he has no free will; therefore he ought not to be punished, and yet God threatens him with punishment. On the other hand; there could be no reward in this case, because man cannot observe that to which God has attached eternal salvation as a reward. If God has given a law which man cannot keep, God Himself would be the Author of sin. We know that this blasphemous doctrine has been propagated by Calvin and other heretical teachers, but the holy Œcumenical Council of Trent has vindicated sound reason and the honor of God in declaring: "If any one say that it is impossible for a man who is justified and in the state of grace to keep the commandments, let him be anathema."

7. But if we are obliged to keep the commandments which the Jews were bound to observe, wherein does Evangelical freedom consist?

It consists in two things: Christ Our Lord has freed us from the Jewish Law, which prescribed circumcision, sacrifices, a certain order of festivals, etc. This ceremonial law was only meant for the Jews, and was only to last until the coming of Christ. This was declared by the apostles in the first general assembly at Jerusalem. For when the Christians of Antioch had sent to ask if they must first be circumcised in order to become Christians, the apostles answered: "It hath seemed good to

"The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve."—St. Matt. iv. 10.



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"This people hath sinned a heinous sin, and they have made to themselves gods of gold.—Exod. xxxii. 31.

FIRST COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

"I am the Lord thy God ; thou shalt not have strange gods before me."

REFLECTION.—God has made us ; from Him we have received all that we have and all that we are. Our chief and most important duty is to serve Him, to do His will, to give Him the honor that is due to Him. If we neglect this duty, all else we do in this world will be naught but vanity and will profit us nothing. Our hearts should constantly overflow with love and gratitude towards God, our greatest benefactor, the best of fathers, who does not cease to bestow on us with a lavish hand numberless benefits at every moment of our life.

PRACTICE.—Offer every morning to God the homage of your adoration and gratitude, beseeching Him to preserve you during the day from all danger of soul and body, and to bestow abundant blessings on you and Yours.

PRAYER.—O my God, I adore Thee as my Creator and sovereign Lord. I thank Thee for all Thy benefits ; I am resolved to keep Thy commandments, and to serve Thee faithfully all my life. O Mary, help me to do so. Amen.

the Holy Ghost and to us to lay no farther burden upon you than these necessary things: That you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication" (Acts xv. 28, 29.)

We see, therefore, that the apostles did not exact the observance of the ceremonial or ritual law.

Under Evangelical or Christian liberty we understand chiefly being freed from sin, which has been effected for us by Christ. This is the freedom of the children of God. This freedom does not exempt us from the service of God; on the contrary, now we can serve God all the better, because we are no longer in the service of Satan. Therefore St. Paul says: "But now being made free from sin, [you have] become servants of God" (Rom. vi. 22).

It is only now that our works have any value, because they are done in Christ. Therefore St. James the Apostle teaches:

"He that hath looked into the perfect law of liberty, and hath continued therein, not becoming a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (St. James i. 25).

Now as there are people in our day, and as there have been such especially at the time of the Reformation, who under cover of freedom committed great excesses, so there were fanatics in the time of the apostles who under the name of Christian

freedom introduced all kinds of grievous moral disorders. The Apostle Peter opposes them in exhorting the faithful in these words: "For so it is the will of God, that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: as free, and not as making in liberty a cloak for malice, but as the servants of God" (1 St. Peter ii. 15, 16).

Application.

1. Every one who knows the commandments of God is obliged to keep them, for God expressly enjoins this. It is not a matter of choice, but of duty, and therefore the Christian must simply repel all temptations with the thought: Such is the will of God. This is the way in which Our Saviour defeated the tempter in the desert by opposing to his words the word of God. It is written, "And the devil was obliged to give way before the word of God." The Christian must say with the Psalmist: "O Lord, my portion, I have said, I would keep Thy law" (Ps. cxviii. 57).

2. As we can only keep the commandments with the help of divine grace, we must not on any account trust in ourselves. Even a wise and highly favored man like Solomon fell from the grace of God. In prayer alone lies all our safety. How beautiful are St. Augustine's words: "God does not command anything impossible. If God gives you a command, He exhorts you to do what you are able,

and to ask for what you are not able, whereupon He helps you that you may become able."

Example.

In Henoch, the father of Mathusala, we find a man who perfectly kept the commandments of God, although Holy Scripture does not expressly say so. Of him we read in Holy Writ: "And he walked with God, and was seen no more: because God took him" (Gen. v. 24). Of Noe it is said: "He was a just and perfect man in his generations, he walked with God" (Gen. vi. 9). To Abraham God said: "Walk before Me and be perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). He certainly kept the commandments who for the love of God was ready to sacrifice his own son Isaac (Gen. xxii.). Of Josue also we are told: "He left not one thing undone of all the commandments which the Lord had commanded Moses" (Josue xi. 15). Ezechias prayed: "O Lord, remember how I have walked before Thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is pleasing before Thee" (4 Kings xx. 3). And of the elder Tobias we read: "He had always feared God from his infancy, and kept His commandments" (Tob. ii. 13). Zachary and Elizabeth "were both just before God, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame" (St. Luke i. 6). When Jesus said to the rich young man, "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the com-

mandments," he could answer: "All these have I kept from my youth" (St. Matt. xix. 20). The lives of all the saints of God furnish us with proofs that it is possible to keep the commandments of God. On the other hand, the fall of the angels shows that even the most holy may fall from the grace of God if they trust in their own strength and do not submit to God.

The Law of Nature.

When God created man, He endowed him with various gifts. Above all He gave him a natural light, by which he can know what is reasonable, what is right, and what he ought to do, and, on the other hand, what is wrong, and what he ought, therefore, to avoid. This natural law was observed by the holy patriarchs, for whom it was the way of salvation. From the time of Adam to that of Moses, *i.e.*, for a period of 2,500 years, no other law was known. It is of this law that the Apostle speaks when he writes: "For when the gentiles who have not the law do by nature those things that are of the law, these having not the law, are a law to themselves: Who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness to them, and their thoughts between themselves accusing, or also defending one another" (Rom. ii. 14, 15).

But, because the divine light was dimmed in the

soul of man by evil habits and constant transgressions, God wished to restore it to its former brightness by giving the commandments to Moses. These commandments are therefore no new law, but rather the explanation of the law which is written in the human heart. These commandments which God has given us were interpreted and confirmed by Christ Our Lord.

The Commandments of Charity.

The observance of the commandments must not spring from servile fear, but from the love of God. He who loves God does not only keep the commandments, but he keeps them all with equal fidelity; and he who loves God loves everything God has created in His infinite love, especially man, the image of God and co-heir of His eternal kingdom. Whoever is animated by the spirit of love does everything that is according to the will of God, and avoids everything that is contrary to His will, and he does and avoids all this because it is the will of God. Therefore the Apostle says: "Love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. xiii. 10).

Even in the time of Moses God spoke thus to the Israelites: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength" (Deut. vi. 4, 5).

And God impressed this commandment most emphatically on the Israelites when He said: "These words which I command thee this day shall be in thy heart; and thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be and move between thy eyes, and thou shalt write them in the entry, and on the doors of thy house" (Deut. vi. 6-9).

What God has commanded in the Old Covenant, Jesus Christ has not only confirmed in the New, but He has explained it, and shown us its right application. One day a scribe asked Our Lord which was the first commandment of all, and Jesus answered: "The first commandment of all is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord thy God is one God. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these" (St. Mark xii. 29-31).

Charity.

"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength." The

meaning of this commandment is this: We must love God by a deliberate act of the will (heart), we must reflect how we can put this love into action (soul), we must really love God with an ardent inward charity (mind), and what our will and our intellect have thus apprehended we must practise to the best of our ability (strength). And as the Israelites were always to have the law of God before their eyes, so it must ever be present to our soul, that its observance is the end for which we were created. It is impossible, however, for us to do this of our own selves, but only by means of a supernatural faculty which we receive in holy Baptism. Therefore we call charity, as well as faith, an infused virtue, and, because it has God for its object, a theological virtue. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given us" (Rom. v. 5).

1. God must be the object of our love, *i.e.*, we must love God above everything else in the world. For the love of God we must, if necessary, sacrifice all the goods of this earth; we must leave father and mother, nay, even give our own life, if charity requires it. All we are allowed to love in this world, we may only love for the sake of God, and in so far as He permits it. We must rather lose everything than commit a sin, for sin separates us from God. "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth

son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me" (St. Matt. x. 37).

2. It is not at all opposed to the love of God that man love himself. He is a creature of God, a child of God, an heir of the kingdom of heaven, destined for eternal bliss. This high dignity confers on the Christian not only the right to love himself, but makes self-love a duty for him. Here, again, however, man may only love himself so far as this love coincides with the will of God, as no sin is committed, and as the honor of God is not offended. When charity is violated, all temporal gain, even the greatest, is a loss; but every loss we suffer for the love of God is a gain for us. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal" (St. John xii. 25).

3. Although we must love God because He commands it, love from this motive would be a most imperfect love. We must rather love God because He is the Sovereign Good, because He is most worthy of our love, and because He contains in Himself all perfection. He is the most excellent, the most beautiful, the most perfect, and therefore the most amiable. He alone is the Sovereign and Eternal Good. Therefore Nehemias prays in these words: "O Lord God, Creator of all things, dreadful and strong, just and merciful, who alone art the good King, who alone art gracious, who

alone art just, and almighty, and eternal" (2 Mach. i. 24, 25).

But we also may and ought to love God for the sake of the many benefits which He has conferred on us and is still conferring every moment. Even before we began to live the Lord looked on us with an eye of mercy and called us to be His children. He says to us through the prophet: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee" (Jer. xxxi. 3).

From the very first moment of our life to our last breath the Lord loads us with undeserved benefits. And these benefits are at the same time the means of our salvation, for they sustain the life of the soul as well as that of the body, in order that we may fulfil both our earthly and our heavenly destiny. This love is called the love of gratitude. "Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us" (1 St. John iv. 19).

4. We must moreover love God, because He has prepared eternal beatitude for us. This beatitude consists in the possession and enjoyment of God Himself. Therefore those who love God feel a longing for God, which is thus described by the apostle: "I have a desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Phil. i. 23).

5. Charity does not only manifest itself in loving affections and emotions, but in an upright mind, in

strong resolves, and above all in the observance of the commandments. It stands to reason that he who acts contrary to the will of God has no love for Him. Therefore Our Saviour says expressly: "He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me" (St. John xiv. 21).

Application.

1. Although charity does not consist in tender emotions, we must not omit to evoke loving affections in our hearts. Even when we are at work, and then more than ever, we can prove to God that for love of Him we are ready to do and suffer all, and to bear all hardships. Let us offer Him our thoughts, affections, desires, actions, toils, and privations, and let us unite them all with the great sacrifice of love which Our Saviour offered for us.

2. But let us also speak very often of the love of God, not only in order to animate ourselves, but also to enkindle divine love in the hearts of our fellow-men, for this is the will of God expressed in the following words: "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (St. Luke xii. 49.)

Examples.

Abraham would have made the greatest sacrifice for the love of God: he would have killed his own son (Gen. xxii.). The three Israelites, An-

nias, Azarias, and Misael, allowed themselves to be thrown into the fiery furnace rather than adore the statue erected by Nabuchodonosor (Dan. iii. 20). Eleazar let himself be beaten to death with scourges, but he did not touch the swine's flesh which was put before him (2 Mach. vi.). The Machabean brothers and their mother showed equal fortitude (2 Mach. vii.). St. Stephen, the proto-martyr, and all the other martyrs of Christ give us the same glorious example.

ALL FOR THE LOVE OF GOD.

The heart of St. John of the Cross burned with such an ardent love of God that the hardest trials and privations seemed easy to him, because he bore all adversities with his eyes fixed on Him who first loved us. He went so far as never to accept an invitation to dine when he had preached in a strange place, for he said: "I do not want to accept pay from men for what I have done for the love of God." Once he was innocently imprisoned and even bodily ill-treated. But, when he was set free, he only complained that he had so little to suffer. To those who wondered at his lamentations, he answered: "Do not be astonished that I love suffering so much, for when I was in prison God gave me a great knowledge of the value of suffering borne for the love of Him." On his death-bed he kept on sighing for release. When asked

by a brother whether he wished to be released on account of his pains, he answered with a smile: "No, dear brother, but because of my hearty desire to see God the hours seem so long to me." The Church therefore calls St. John of the Cross, in the Collect of his feast, a lover of the Cross.

Sins Against the Love of God.

Every sin violates charity. The effect of mortal sin is to kill the love of God in our soul, whereas venial sin only weakens its fervor. But there are sins which in themselves are opposed to the love of God. To these belongs above all:

1. Hatred of God. This is the devil's own sin. For he did not simply transgress a commandment, but he rebelled against God and would have deprived Him of His sovereignty, and put himself in His place, had he been able to do so. Then there is:

2. Impiety or contempt of God, when we turn away from God. An impious man of this kind is found in Pharaoh, who, on being asked by Moses in the name of God to let the Israelites depart, hardened his heart, and, in spite of all the divine judgments which he saw before his eyes, would not turn to God.

3. Forgetfulness of God, or indifference for God's honor. Of this sin those are chiefly guilty who

know that their inferiors commit sin and do not interfere, or allow God to be blasphemed in their presence and do not raise their voice against it.

4. Murmuring against God's providence. In this way Jonas sinned, who tried to evade the command of God by taking ship for Tharsis, instead of going to Ninive. And when God spared the inhabitants of Ninive, because they did penance, put on sackcloth, and proclaimed a fast, he murmured against God and wished to die (Jonas i. 3; iv. 2-4).

The opposite virtue of these sins is zeal for God's honor, which boldly opposes all evil.

5. Lastly, we have to name idolatry in its extended sense, *i.e.*, such an inordinate affection for creatures that we would rather transgress God's commandments and commit sin, or allow others to commit sin, than overcome the love of creatures or keep it in its proper bounds. Thus parents love their children more than God when they allow them to do as they like, and bring them up to vanity and pride, whereas God commands that they should be trained in modesty, obedience, and humility. So also many a one loves a person, and, in order to obtain her in marriage, he sacrifices his faith and the faith of his children if this is made a condition. Animals are often loved inordinately, and so much is spent on them that the poor would be glad to have only part of it. If anybody loves

money and possessions so much that he strives to acquire them by unlawful means, or does not restore them when he has acquired them dishonestly, or if he becomes hard towards his fellow-men for the sake of worldly gain, he adores Mammon. The god of the glutton is his belly.

This kind of idolatry is, moreover, committed by all those who trust more in man than in God. All the impious are guilty of it.

Every inordinate affection leads to this creature worship, if we do not resist it from the very beginning.

ZEAL FOR THE HONOR OF GOD.

In the time of Antiochus, king of Syria, there lived in the Jewish town of Modin a priest of the name of Mathathias. He was much honored in all Judea for his piety and zeal for the law of God. He had five sons, who, like their father, walked in the ways of the law; Judas, who afterwards received the name of Machabeus the Hammer, was the greatest among them. To this man King Antiochus sent messengers to ask him and the inhabitants of Modin to sacrifice to heathen idols and eat swine's flesh, and to threaten him with death if he refused. If, on the contrary, Mathathias would offer sacrifice, he and his sons were to be counted among the friends of the king, and loaded with gold and silver and many presents. But Mathathias answered

and said in a loud voice: "Although all nations obey King Antiochus, so as to depart every man from the service of the law of his fathers, and consent to his commandments, I and my sons, and my brethren, will obey the law of our fathers." And, when a Jew stepped forth in the sight of all to offer sacrifice on the altar which the messenger of Antiochus had erected, his wrath was kindled, and he slew him on the altar, and pulled down the altar. And he left the city with his sons and fled into the mountains, and many that sought after judgment and justice went up with him, and they went round about and threw down the altars, and they recovered the law out of the hands of the nations and yielded not the horn to the sinner (1. Mach. ii.).

Charity Towards Our Neighbor.

The object of our love is God in the first place, but our neighbor in the second, and the commandment of charity towards our neighbor is expressly declared by Our Lord to be equivalent to the commandment of charity towards God. "And the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (St. Mark xii. 31).

1. The word *neighbor* does not only designate those who are nearly related to us by the ties of blood, or who live with us in the same house, not only our friends, our countrymen, our namesakes,

but every one who has a claim on our help, whether he be of our faith or not, whether he be our friend or our enemy. Our Saviour clearly teaches this in the parable of the Good Samaritan (St. Luke x.). It is where the need is greatest that we must help first, and this is especially the case where the soul is in danger. But when the necessity is equally great, we may give the preference to our relatives, friends, and those of our own faith. We may also render greater assistance to those who are more worthy of charity, and we may refuse our help altogether to those who constantly abuse it. "Whilst we have time, let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith" (Gal. vi. 10).

2. We must love our neighbor for the sake of God. In man we love and honor God Himself, for man is created after the image of God. Moreover, we are members of the same family, for we are children of God, we have God for our common Father, we have all the same vocation to attain heaven, whether we be rich or poor. The Prophet Malachias reproves the Jews for their want of charity when he says: "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us? Why then doth every one of us despise his brother?" (Mal. ii. 10).

Besides, love of our neighbor is the test by which we know whether love of God be genuine, for the Apostle says: "If any man say, I love God,

and hateth his brother, he is a liar. For he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God, whom he seeth not? And this commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God love also his brother" (1 St. John iv. 20, 21).

3. When the commandment says: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," this does not imply that I am bound to love him in the same degree as myself, but that I must love him in the same manner as myself. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches expressly that the words "as myself" do not refer to the degree, but to the manner in which we must love. In the same way as we desire all good for ourselves and try to avoid all evil, we are to desire every blessing for our fellow-men, and grieve with them over their misfortunes. "Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep" (Rom. xii. 15).

How we are to love our neighbor is summed up very simply in the following two precepts of the natural law: "Do not do to others what you do not wish them to do to you;" "Do to others as you wish to be done by."

These precepts of the natural law are confirmed by Holy Scriptures. When the elder Tobias thought he was going to die, he exhorted his son in these words: "See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another"

(Tob. iv. 16). And Our Saviour teaches: "All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them. For this is the law and the prophets" (St. Matt. vii. 12).

4. But charity must not be satisfied with empty words and wishes, it must show itself in works of practical help and assistance in corporal as well as in spiritual need. The apostle exhorts us in the name of God in these words: "Let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed, and in truth (1 St. John iii. 18).

5. This precept of charity does not, however, give a *right* to the poor to claim our help and assistance. They must look for charity and mercy, which they may invoke, but which they must try to merit by faith and confidence, by patience and content, by temperance and industry. The Apostle Paul could write of himself to the Christians: "When I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: In all things I have kept myself from being burthensome to you, and so I will keep myself" (2 Cor. xi. 9).

6. Holy Scripture recommends to our charity above all widows and orphans, for they are those who have generally lost their protector and support. The impious take advantage of their helplessness, and injure and oppress them, because they have nobody to take up their cause. "Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father is this:

to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation" (St. James i. 27).

7. How charity shows itself in our daily intercourse with our fellow-men is described by St. Paul in these words: "Charity is patient, is kind: charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 4-7).

Examples.

Holy Scripture tells us the most beautiful and touching examples of charity. Abraham sat before his tent and saw three strangers come to him. He did not know them, but he adored them down to the ground, and said: "Lord, if I have found favor in Thy sight, pass not away from Thy servant; but I will fetch a little water and wash your feet, and rest ye under the tree. And I will send a morsel of bread, and strengthen ye your heart." Then Abraham hastened to the tent and said to Sara: "Make haste, temper together three measures of flour, and make cakes upon the hearth." He bade his servant to prepare a very tender calf; he himself took butter and milk, and the calf which he had boiled, and set it before his guests. (Gen. xviii. 2-8.) When Abraham's servant, Eleazar, asked Rebecca for a

little water, she did not only give him to drink out of her pitcher, but she ran back to the well to draw water, and having drawn, she gave to all the camels (Gen. xxiv. 20). When the Israelites began to think that Moses had forsaken them, and made a golden calf in order to adore it, and God wanted to destroy the whole nation, Moses prayed thus to the Lord: "Either forgive them this trespass, or if Thou do not, strike me out of the book that Thou hast written" (Exod. xxxii. 31). He was ready to give up eternal bliss rather than let the people perish. Tobias daily went among all his kindred, and comforted them, and distributed to every one as he was able of his goods, so that he became poor himself (Tob. i. 19).

At the marriage of Cana, our Blessed Lady interceded for the guests when the wine failed (St. John ii. 3). The early Christians had all things in common, "neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own" (Acts iv. 32). The pious Tabitha was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. When she was dead, and they sent for St. Peter, all the widows stood about him weeping and showing him the coats and garments which Tabitha had made (Acts ix. 36-39).

How beautiful is the sympathy of the neighbors and kinsfolk of Elizabeth, who rejoiced when they heard that the Lord had showed His great mercy

towards her (St. Luke i. 58). When the widow of Nain followed the body of her son to the grave, a great multitude of the city was with her. And when Our Lord had given back the son to his afflicted mother, they glorified God and rejoiced with her (St. Luke vii. 12-16). St. Paul says of himself that he had great sadness and continual sorrow in his heart, because his kinsmen would not receive the Gospel of Christ, and he wished, like Moses, to be anathema if only his brethren might be in union with Christ (Rom. ix. 23).

Love of Our Enemies.

The commandment which God has given us to love our neighbor extends to our enemies. Nobody may be excluded from our love. This seems very hard to our poor human nature. But:

1. God has expressly commanded it, and this alone is sufficient for convincing us that we *can* love our enemies. Our Saviour says: "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you" (St. Luke vi. 27, 28).

He has, moreover, given us the example Himself: He did not only pray for His executioners, He also made excuses for them when He said: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (St. Luke xxiii. 34).

St. Leo says, in contemplating this wonderful love: "Our Lord did not remember that He was dying by His enemies, He only remembered that He was dying for them."

2. Our Lord has attached the pardon of our own sins to our readiness to forgive those who have injured us. He taught us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us." And He added expressly: "If you will forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences" (St. Matt. vi. 14, 15).

Whoever does not forgive his enemies draws down upon himself the curse of God in saying the Our Father, for he says: Do to me, O Lord, as I do to my enemies, and, because I do not forgive them, do Thou not forgive me either. We see how such an unforgiving man is dealt with in the parable of the unmerciful servant, who did not come out of prison till he had paid the last farthing, although his master had forgiven him his whole enormous debt before.

3. This precept of loving our enemies does not enjoin that we should love our enemies in the same way as we love our friends, parents, benefactors, *i.e.*, not as sensibly and as tenderly, but we must not wish them any harm, but rather, as far as we can, shield them from evil. We must not only

wish them all good from our hearts, we must *do* good unto them as far as we can. On no account may the Christian take revenge for injuries he has received. If he whom we deem our enemy has done us any injury, God will punish him, for He says: "Revenge is Mine, and I will repay them in due time" (Deut. xxxii. 35).

If we treat our enemy with charity, we imitate our heavenly Father, "who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust" (St. Matt. v. 45).

4. If we have been injured by any one, we may try to obtain just and legal reparation; when we are assaulted, we may defend ourselves as far as is necessary. On the other hand, we may not refuse to salute our adversary or to return his salute, we may not revile and insult him, or refuse him such services as usage and custom require, especially when he is in distress. We must altogether show by our outward conduct that we have no hatred or rancor in our heart, but are ready to be reconciled with our enemy, even should he himself not be willing to forgive.

Application.

1. Let us strive above all to banish all bitterness from our hearts, and let us consider that it is often mere thoughtlessness, and not malice, by which we have been offended. Let us pray for

our adversaries, that God may give them a right understanding. But let us remember above all that, whatever men may do to injure us, their guilt towards us is only very small in comparison with the immense debt we have incurred by offending God.

2. As long as we harbor any enmity in our heart, all our good works are of no avail. Therefore Our Saviour exhorts us in these words: "If, therefore, thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother has anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother: and then coming, thou shalt offer thy gift" (St. Matt. v. 23, 24).

3. Let us render good for evil according to the words of the apostle: "If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat: if he thirst, give him to drink. For, doing this, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head" (Rom. xii. 20).

Examples.

The sons of Jacob had treated their brother Joseph most cruelly and had deserved severe punishment. When Joseph held them in his power, he could easily have revenged himself on them. But he not only refrained from taking revenge, but moreover loaded them with benefits after the death of their father Jacob (Gen. l. 21). David was

threatened with death by Saul, to whom he had rendered great service, and was obliged to flee. Saul pursued him with 3,000 men in the desert, and searched all the nooks and caves for him, but David knew the hiding-places in the desert better than he. Once he was so near Saul that he could have killed him, but he contented himself with cutting off the hem of his robe, and sent it to Saul in order to show him that he could have put him to death. Another time David went in the night with his armor-bearer Abisai into Saul's tent, and Abisai asked David to kill his persecutor. But David only took Saul's spear and his cup of water with him, and thus showed to the king that God had given him in his power, but that he had honored in Saul the anointed of the Lord (1 Kings xxiv. 1-12). The proto-martyr St. Stephen gave us, like Our Saviour Himself, an example of love towards our enemies. He not only forgave, but he prayed with his dying breath for his murderers in these words: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts vii. 59).

Works of Mercy.

Charity towards our neighbor is exercised in relieving either his corporal or his spiritual need. Somebody may be very rich and live in abundance, and yet*be in spiritual want. And another may be destitute and not possess a farthing, and yet help

the soul of his neighbor. Whether we relieve the corporal or the spiritual need of a fellow-creature, we give an alms. Such a work is called a work of mercy. Therefore we distinguish corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY.

The corporal works of mercy are:

1. To feed the hungry.
2. To give drink to the thirsty.
3. To clothe the naked.
4. To harbor the harborless.
5. To visit the sick.
6. To redeem the prisoners.
7. To bury the dead.

1. The unequal distribution of worldly goods shows that it is the will of God that those who are rich in possessions should assist those who have none, not by sharing their property with them, but by preserving them from want. God has, moreover, expressly enjoined this duty on us, and has promised a reward in heaven to those who fulfil it. To those on His right hand who have done works of mercy, He will say on the Day of Judgment: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat: I was thirsty, and you gave *Me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took Me in: naked,

and you covered Me; sick, and you visited Me: I was in prison, and you came to Me" (St. Matt. xxv. 34-36).

But to those on His left who did not feed the hungry nor give drink to the thirsty, the Lord will say on the last day: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go into everlasting punishment" (St. Matt. xxv. 41, 46).

2. By doing works of mercy we obtain not only spiritual graces and a reward in heaven, but even temporal blessings, as is shown in the story of Tobias, who by his almsdeeds earned the grace of having his eyesight restored to him and of receiving great riches besides.

And the Angel Raphael declared to Tobias: "When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by day in thy house, and bury them by night, I offered thy prayer to the Lord" (Tob. xii. 12).

3. In giving alms, the following principles ought to be followed: We may only give alms of our own legitimate property. Of strange property we may only give alms if the owner allows it, or if his permission can be taken for granted. Thus servants and children may only give alms out of the common family property as far as the master of the house expressly or tacitly permits. The mother of the family, however, has a right to give alms with

moderation, even without asking leave. Servants may give away remains of food if they are sure that otherwise they would go to waste.

In ordinary cases of want we are obliged to give alms at least of our abundance. When our neighbor is in great distress, we must give even that which is required to keep up our position in life, and must retrench upon our comforts. But when our neighbor is in extreme need we are bound to give all that is not absolutely necessary for our own maintenance.

4. The best alms are those for which we deprive ourselves—of our own food or some other necessary. He who gives of his superfluity does a good work, but he who gives what he needs himself does a better one. It was therefore a beautiful custom with our forefathers always to give alms on fast-days, for we are not to fast in order to save for ourselves, but in order to give to the poor what we have saved. The poor widow who cast two mites into the treasury cast in more than all the others, according to Our Lord's own words: "For she of her want cast in all the living that she had" (St. Luke xxi. 4). "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold: for alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting" (Tob. xii. 8, 9).

There are two more rules which we must follow

in giving alms. First, we must not be slow when our help is needed. Many a one might have helped, but he delayed too long, and, when he wanted to give at last, it was too late, and help was of no use. "He gives double who gives quickly."

Secondly, when we give, it must be done cheerfully. "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix. 7).

We should follow the exhortation which Tobias gave to his son: "According to thy ability be merciful. If thou have much, give abundantly: if thou have little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little" (Tob. iv. 8, 9).

Lastly, the best way of giving alms is by adding a spiritual work of mercy to a corporal one. When we open our hand the poor man's heart goes out to us, and a loving exhortation finds a willing ear.

Application.

1. How consoling is the thought that when we give we are not only none the poorer for it, but our possession will be increased by that hundred-fold reward which Our Saviour will bestow on us some day in the dwellings of His heavenly Father. What we give to the poor will be kept for us in the great treasury from which we shall draw in the Day of Judgment. "He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord: and He will repay him" (Prov. xix. 17).

2 By giving alms we gain the intercession of the poor, for it is written: "Shut up alms in the heart of the poor, and it shall obtain help for thee against all evil" (Ecclus. xxix. 15).

When, therefore, we are in any trouble we must not only turn to God in our prayers, but give alms, and God will be merciful to us as we have been merciful to His poor. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (St. Matt. v. 7).

3. "Almsgiving does not make poor," says the Proverb. He who provides for the poor provides for himself. "He that giveth to the poor shall not want: he that despiseth his entreaty shall suffer indigence" (Prov. xxviii. 27).

Examples.

The beautiful examples of practical charity which we have quoted from Holy Scriptures (p. 33) are as many examples of the exercise of mercy. The lives of the saints abound in instances of the noblest generosity.

St. Louis, king of France, always fed a hundred and twenty poor at his table, wherever he might be. St. Bernard deprived himself every day of a part of the food which was put before him, and often suffered hunger for several days, in order to be able to provide for the poor. St. Elizabeth, landgravine of Thuringia, spun, knitted, sewed for the poor and made garments for them with her own hands. St.

Basil knew no other use to make of the lands which the emperor had given him but to sell them and build a hospital with the money. Deo Gratias, the holy bishop of Carthage, not only gave away all he possessed, but also sold the gold and silver vessels of his church in order to redeem the captives which Genseric, king of the Vandals, had carried off to Africa. The holy Pope Gregory could not be dissuaded from visiting the sick at the time of the plague, and taking the sacraments to them in person.

SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY.

In the same way as we speak of seven corporal works of mercy, we count seven spiritual works of mercy, viz.:

1. To instruct the ignorant.
2. To admonish sinners.
3. To counsel the doubtful.
4. To comfort the afflicted.
5. To bear wrongs patiently.
6. To forgive injuries.
7. To pray for the living and the dead.

1. It is our duty to instruct the ignorant if by our instruction we can confirm them in their faith, or convert them from heresy by helping them to the knowledge of the truth, or if we can prevent sin or evil.

2. We are bound to admonish the sinner when the

sin is a grievous one, and especially when the erring person is under our charge, as, for instance, children, servants, journeymen, apprentices, laborers, etc. On the other hand, we are not obliged to reprove them if this duty is very difficult and we cannot expect any result from it, provided that our office and position do not make it incumbent on us. But all admonitions must be administered with charity, in the spirit of humility, and in the consciousness of our own sinfulness, without any asperity. Such admonition is called fraternal correction.

3. Counselling the doubtful is a duty for us when we know for certain or have reason to assume that the advice we can give is really good. But even good advice must not be forced on any one, but ought to be given with kindness and benevolence.

4. When an injury is done unto us and we sustain some loss thereby, or our honor and good name are attainted, we may seek for reparation and redress even by going to law, but we must not withhold our interior forgiveness.

5. Prayer for others is the perfection and completion of all works of mercy, because we implore the divine assistance for those whom we cannot help ourselves.

Examples.

St. John the Baptist rebuked Herod severely for having his brother's wife, although he could foresee

that his boldness would cost him his liberty (St. Mark vi. 18). Our Saviour Himself deigned to show us how we are to instruct the ignorant by His discourse with the Samaritan woman, whom He treated with so much kindness, although she was by no means a virtuous person (St. John iv.). The ancient counsellors of Roboam, who had stood by his father when he was still alive, gave this salutary advice to the king: "If thou please this people, and soothe them with kind words, they will be thy servants forever." If Roboam had followed this warning, the ten tribes would not have fallen away from him (2 Par. x.). How beautiful is the exhortation of St. Paul to the Thessalonians: "We beseech you, brethren, rebuke the unquiet, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men" (1 Thess. v. 14). When David was obliged to flee from Absalom, his unnatural son, a relation of Saul, called Semei, met him and cursed him, called him a man of blood and a man of Belial, and threw stones at him. Abisai, David's armor-bearer, wanted to go and cut off Semei's head, but David said: "Let him alone, that he may curse as the Lord has bidden him. Perhaps the Lord may look upon my affliction, and the Lord may render me good for the cursing of this day" (2 Kings xvi. 11, 12). Pope Gregory VII. had the courage to make the Emperor Henry IV. do public penance in the courtyard of the Castle of Canossa for having trans-

gressed both human and divine law. The holy priest John Baptist de la Salle founded a society for the purpose of instructing Christian youth, the Congregation of Christian Brothers. St. Anthony was consulted from far and near, and even the emperor and his sons wrote to him, and St. Anthony gave them salutary advice. St. Ambrose was a very powerful comforter. He raised up St. Monica, who was crushed by sorrow for the sinful life of her son. "It is not possible," he told her, "that the child of such tears should be lost." The early Christians, who were so cruelly persecuted by the heathens, prayed all the same in their religious assemblies for the Roman emperors. A holy priest in Alsace, in the neighborhood of New-Breisach, had the misfortune of incurring the anger of a wicked man. The latter fired a pistol at him one morning when he was returning from church, and wounded him mortally. The good priest not only forgave his murderer, but in the last moments before his death he appointed this man's children his heirs in order to save them from the misery which their father had brought upon them. St. Matilda, wife of the German Emperor Henry I., caused the holy sacrifice of the Mass to be offered every day for the repose of the soul of her deceased husband.

The Ten Commandments of God.

The Giving of the Law on Mount Sinai.

THE Lord God had led the descendants of Abraham to Egypt to make them a numerous nation there. But in order to train them to become a people among whom the knowledge of the true God should be cultivated, and out of which the Redeemer was to arise, they had to be separated for a time from all other nations and accustomed to consider themselves as the people of God. Therefore the Lord led the Israelites into the desert, He gave them statutes and commandments, and left them in the wilderness, till all those who had come out of Egypt were dead, and a new generation had sprung up who knew nothing of the flesh-pots and the idolatry of the Egyptians.

On the fiftieth day after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, God gave them the Ten Commandments through Moses under circumstances which were to impress upon them in the most solemn manner the obligation of religiously observing them, and which were to fill them with fear.

For two days the people had to sanctify themselves and to wash their garments. Round about the mount certain limits were appointed to the people, and it was forbidden under pain of death to go up into the mount, or even to touch the borders thereof. On the morning of the third day thunders began to be heard and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mount, and the noise of the trumpet sounded loud and awful as for the Judgment Day. And the people in the camp feared; but Moses led the Israelites out of the camp, and they stood at the bottom of the mount. And all Mount Sinai was on a smoke, because the Lord was come down upon it in fire, and the smoke arose from it as out of a furnace, and all the mount was terrible. And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai and called Moses unto the top thereof: "And the Lord spoke these words:

"I. I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth.

"Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them: I am the Lord thy God, mighty, jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me:

and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments.

“II. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain.

“III. Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day. Six days shalt thou labor, and shalt do all thy works. But on the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work on it, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy beast, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it.

“IV. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land which the Lord thy God will give thee.

“V. Thou shalt not kill.

“VI. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

“VII. Thou shalt not steal.

“VIII. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

“IX., X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house: neither shalt thou desire his wife, nor his servant, nor his handmaid, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is his.

“And all the people saw the voices and the flames, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mount smoking: and being terrified and struck with fear they stood afar off, saying to Moses: Speak thou to us, and we will hear: let not the Lord speak to us, lest we die.” (Exod. xx. 1-19.)

From that time forth God declared His Will to the people through Moses. And He gave to Moses two stone tables written with the finger of God (Exod. xxxi. 18). The tables were placed in the Ark of the Covenant, and were called “The Tables of the Testimony.” And the Lord had written on the first table the three first commandments which contain our duty towards God.

On the second table He had written the seven commandments which set forth our duties towards our fellow-men. They are the duties which must absolutely be observed if human society is to go on at all. They are, as it were, the four pillars on which the welfare of society rests, viz., 1, Order and purity of family life as ordained by God (fourth, sixth, and ninth commandments); 2, the safety of human life (fifth commandment); 3, the sacredness of property (seventh and tenth commandments); 4, the confidence which everybody is entitled to place in his neighbor (eighth commandment). These seven commandments are comprised in the precept of charity towards our neighbor, as the first three are contained in the precept of charity towards God.

Let us now consider the circumstances under which the promulgation of the divine law took place, and also the preparation which God required of the people.

1. God allowed the Israelites first to feel the whole pressure of the Egyptian servitude, and to pass through the dreadful Egyptian plagues, before He gave them the law. By this they were to recognize in God their benefactor, and in the rugged desert they were to learn that they had no other helper than God alone. So we, too, shall be more ready to receive the law when we remember that in the desert of this life nothing can help us but God and the law of God.

2. How carefully had the Israelites to prepare for the reception of the commandments! They had to wash themselves and their garments, and keep from all defilement. The Lord came in awful majesty, and spoke out of a thick cloud with fire, lightning, and thunder. This is meant to teach us that we must receive the law of God with a chaste and humble heart, and that the punishments which God threatened await us if we do not observe the commandments.

3. The Fourth and Fifth Books of Moses contain a complete and detailed code of laws, which Moses received directly from the hand of God. Of all these, only the ten commandments were written on the tables by God Himself. For the ten com-

mandments are the summary of the whole law, and are founded on the precepts of charity towards God and charity towards our neighbor. Therefore we have in the ten commandments a rule for all our actions, as they contain the whole moral law. They reveal a most wonderful wisdom. Even if we did not know that they are derived directly from God Himself, we could easily recognize their origin, for no other people in the world have so perfect a code of laws, the greatest benefit to human society. Paganism was sunk so deep in the mire of vice because it did not know this code of laws. Therefore the people of the Israelites rank so high among all nations, and Moses justly said of them: "This is your wisdom, and understanding in the sight of nations, that hearing all these precepts, they may say: Behold a wise and understanding people, a great nation" (Deut. iv. 6).

4. The whole law has been given to the Jews, but we Christians are equally bound to keep the part of it relating to morals, *i.e.*, the commandments. Nay, we must not only keep these commandments according to the letter, but we must endeavor to penetrate deeper and deeper into their spirit. Christ assures us: "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (St. Matt. v. 17).

Our Saviour shows us by an example how this is meant when He says: "Unless your justice abound

more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire (St. Matt. v. 20-22)."

We see, therefore, that we are to fulfil the commandments, not according to the letter, but according to the spirit of Jesus Christ.

5. Every commandment which explicitly commands anything, implicitly prohibits all that is opposed to the commandment. On the other hand, every commandment which expressly forbids anything, enjoins the contrary of what has been forbidden. When God, for instance, says: "Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day," He prohibits at the same time everything by which the Sabbath can be profaned. And when God forbids that we should covet our neighbor's goods, He commands us at the same time to rejoice in our neighbor's possessions as if they were our own. This kind of justice is more perfect than the justice of the Pharisees, who only observed the letter of the law.

6. Although we should keep the commandments for this reason alone, that our temporal welfare

depends on it, and that it would be the ruin of human society if every one could lie, steal, and kill with impunity, yet, in order to incite us to keep His commandments, God has attached rewards and punishments to their observance or non-observance. How abundant are the temporal blessings which the Lord will pour out on those who keep His law! His promises are contained in the following proclamation addressed to His people, Israel: "If thou wilt hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to do and keep all His commandments . . . all these blessings shall come upon thee and overtake thee: . . . Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the droves of thy herds, and the folds of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy barns, and blessed thy stores. Blessed shalt thou be coming in and going out" (Deut. xxviii. 1-6).

On the other hand, He lays the most dreadful curses on the transgressors of the law. "But if thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep and to do all His commandments and ceremonies which I command thee this day, all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, cursed in the field. Cursed shall be thy barn, and cursed thy stores. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy womb, and the fruit of thy grounds, the herds of thy oxen, and the

flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be coming in, and cursed going out. The Lord shall send upon thee famine and hunger" (Deut. xxviii. 15-20).

These are great promises and fearful punishments. But what are temporal punishments in comparison with the awful pains of hell, which those have to undergo who do not keep the commandments of God, and cannot enter life. And how insignificant are all temporal blessings when compared with those heavenly joys which Holy Scripture describes by that one word: Life! The reward of him who keeps the commandments is no other than God Himself, He who said to Abraham: "I am thy reward exceeding great" (Gen. xv. 1).

7. God prefaced the Ten Commandments with these words: "I am the Lord thy God, who led thee out of the land of Egypt, and of the house of bondage." We are reminded, therefore, that God is our Master, whom we are bound to serve, because we belong to Him; we are reminded that the Master whom we serve is God, that hence we cannot be slaves of men, but that the whole of our life consists in service of God. And the Jews were put in mind that God was their Benefactor, their Redeemer, and that to serve Him was for them a duty of gratitude. We Christians have not only been redeemed from bodily servitude, but from the slavery of sin and of Satan, and the precious blood has opened for us the Promised Land of adoption

as God's children here below, and hereafter, the eternal kingdom of heaven. Thus both duty and gratitude compel us to keep the commandments of God.

The First Commandment.

"Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me. Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image to adore it."

The Worship of God.

OF all our duties the most important is our duty towards God. Therefore we are commanded first and foremost to recognize only one God as the true God of heaven and earth, and to render to Him alone that homage which we owe to the Supreme Being, who at the same time is our Master. This homage we call adoration.

The first commandment enjoins principally those duties which are based on the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity. As, however, believing, hoping, and loving are acts of the soul, this worship is in the first place an interior one. But it is evident that the inward disposition of believing in God, hoping in God, and loving God above all things must reveal itself in outward actions, just as the species and quality of a tree are known by the fruit it produces. Interior religion, there-

fore, must necessarily find its expression in exterior worship.

1. We must mark above all that there is no interior worship without an exterior one. The emotions of the soul determine the actions of a man. The modest, meek, humble, peaceable, chaste, kind, are known by their deeds as well as the proud, quarrelsome, angry, unchaste, hard-hearted. In the same way faith, hope, and charity show themselves in the outward conduct of a man if they are alive in his soul. Whoever worships God inwardly is urged to manifest his homage by outward acts.

On the other hand, man can worship God exteriorly without believing in Him, without hoping in Him, without loving Him. He can dissemble and feign a false worship, he can join in the services of the Church, hold pious discourses, and yet not be a God-fearing man. He may do all this from human respect, from avarice, or other bad motives. But this exterior worship is of no value, and a detestable hypocrisy. Such a man is like the Pharisees whom our blessed Lord taunted with being like whited sepulchres. Outwardly they appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and of all filthiness (St. Matt. xxiii. 27).

2. From what we have just said it appears that in the Catholic Church external worship alone is not considered religion, that religion is not altogether an exterior act, that the Church does not

teach that we can gain eternal life by going to confession, communicating, praying, fasting, giving alms, going to church, etc. Nothing is more unfounded than this accusation. These works can only have any value and merit heaven when they proceed from the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Therefore the apostle says: "And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned [in martyrdom], and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Cor. xiii. 3).

Interior Worship.

We fulfil, therefore, the first commandment by believing in God and accepting everything God has revealed;

By loving God above all things and all things for the love of God;

By placing in God and in God alone our hope and confidence;

By standing in awe of God, walking in His holy fear;

By praying to God, whether it be to adore Him, to supplicate Him, or to thank Him for the benefits which we have received;

By uniting our will to the will of God, and desiring nothing but what God wills, and by exercising the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity.

We are bound to elicit acts of faith, hope, and charity when this is necessary for overcoming a temptation, or for the observance of a commandment; when we come to the age of reason; when we are in danger of death, and, altogether, several times in the year. In addition to this we should make acts of these three virtues before and after receiving a sacrament. It is also a very commendable practice to do so as often as we assist at any service of the Church or listen to a sermon.

The Nature of Faith.

If we would attain the end for which we have been created, namely, the salvation of our souls, it is of vital necessity that we know God, by whom all things are made and have their being, and who is from all eternity. To such knowledge we can attain not through human reasoning, but only through faith. Now, faith is a virtue and a gift of God, whereby we hold for true whatever God has revealed and has presented through His Church for our acceptance and belief.

Faith may be defined as follows: To hold for true whatever another tells us, without requiring from such person any proofs or evidences of the truth of his assertions. As soon as we know that a truth has been revealed by God, we believe it without exacting the proof of its genuineness, be-

cause we know that God cannot err nor can He assert falsehood, since He Himself is eternal and infallible truth. This is religious faith, or faith in the true sense of the word.

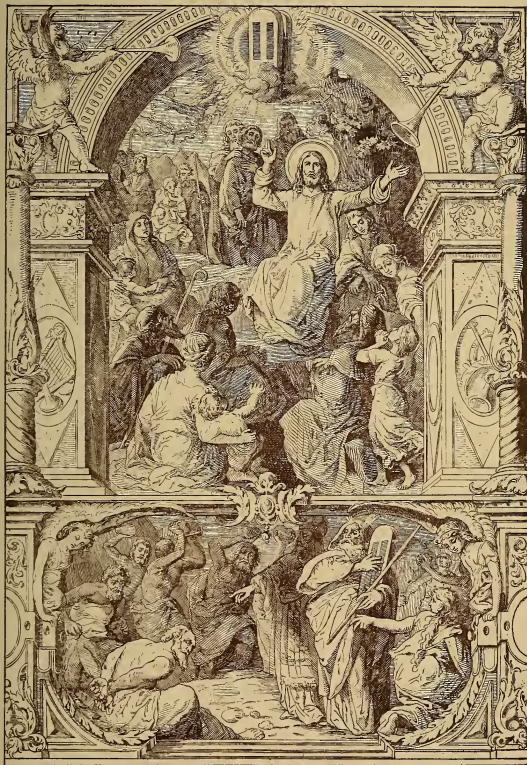
Faith is a gift of God. St. Paul received this gift or grace of faith while journeying to Damascus with the avowed intent of persecuting the Christians. We receive the grace of faith in Baptism, as well as in the other sacraments, by our zealous daily prayer. All our study, science, and labors cannot give us faith. Hence St. Paul writes: "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii. 8).

Yet while granting us faith, God does not force our belief. We have our free will, which may either accept or reject faith. If we accept and preserve through life the faith given to us by God, if we direct all our thoughts, words, and actions in accordance with the law and requirements of faith, that faith becomes a real virtue, and then, and only then, may we call ourselves believing Christians. The true faith of a Catholic Christian is, therefore, a virtue and a gift of God, by which we hold for true whatever God has revealed.

Example.

In the year 1842 a young French Israelite, Alphonse Ratisbonne, went to Rome. He stayed a few days in the Eternal City without taking much

"But I say to you not to swear at all. Let your speech be, Yea, yea: No, no."—St. Matt. v. 34. 37.



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"They brought forth him that hath blasphemed without the camp, and they stoned him."—Lev. xiv. 23.

SECOND COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”

REFLECTION.—The name of God is most holy and should always be pronounced in the most reverential manner. This our divine Saviour requires of us, for He teaches us to say in the “Our Father”—that most sublime and comprehensive of prayers: “Hallowed be Thy name.” As disciples of Our Lord we are bound always to show due reverence to the holy name of God, and to seek, by our good life, to induce others to serve Him and to praise His holy name. At the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ we should at least bow our head in reverence, for St. Paul says: “In the name of Jesus every knee should bow.” (Phil. ii. 10.)

PRACTICE.—In all our sufferings and trials let us always invoke with confidence the holy names of Jesus and Mary and the names of our special patrons.

PRAYER.—Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be Thy name. Holy, holy, holy the Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

interest in anything, and was about to leave when he remembered that he wanted to leave his card for Theodore, Baron of Bussiere, a friend of his brother. The baron, who had lately become a Catholic, was at home when Alphonse called, and being delighted to see him, persuaded him to prolong his stay in Rome. Although aware of Ratisbonne's antipathy to Christianity and especially to Catholicity, the baron presented him with a miraculous medal and a copy of the "Memorare." Ratisbonne accepted these merely to please his friend, but laughed at what he called the absurdity of the thing. But the words of the prayer made an impression on him, though he did not admit it. On the following day, January 10th, he and the baron visited the Church of St. Andrew the Apostle. The baron, wishing to attend to some business, excused himself for a while, and left his friend examining the architecture of the building. In about ten minutes the baron returned, and was astonished to find his Jewish friend kneeling in the chapel of St. Michael the Archangel, his head bent and his face bathed with tears. In his hand was the medal, which he kissed fervently. When his friend spoke to him, Ratisbonne exclaimed: "Oh, how favored I am! How happy I ought to be. I have been saved from a dreadful abyss. Alas! my poor Hebrew brethren. I can no longer live without Baptism. Oh, Baptism—only Baptism!" He then re-

lated that the Blessed Virgin, enveloped in glory, had appeared to him in the form in which she was represented in the miraculous medal, and had beckoned him towards her, and that he then felt himself forced upon his knees, and perceived within his heart and intellect the light of a newly found divine faith. Eleven days after this event he was baptized. Subsequently he became a priest, and, under God, was the means of bringing his brother into the Church.

The Necessity and Object of Faith.

It is not a matter of indifference what we believe or how much we believe. We are bound to believe all that God has revealed without distinction. He who would gainsay the least part of divine revelation or refuse to accept the whole would deny God's own truthfulness. "Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and is a rewarder of them that seek Him" (Heb. xi. 6). "If you believe not you shall die in your sins" (St. John viii. 24).

It is not enough to know that what God says is true, because God is the eternal and infallible truth; we must know with certainty and exactness what God has spoken to us. Who teaches this?

St. Paul says: "God, who at sundry times and

in divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by His prophets, last of all in these days hath spoken to us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the world" (Heb. i. 1, 2). When the fulness of time was come and sin had reached its most enormous proportions, God sent to man His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, that He might teach them and save them. Jesus Christ possessed the fulness of the Godhead, and hence the fulness of truth. This truth He imparted to His apostles, who became the leaders and teachers of the Church which He established then. "As the Father has sent Me," said He to them, "so do I send you. Go teach all nations." To these also Christ sent the Holy Spirit, who was to remain with them and their successors for all time, teaching them all truth and preserving them from error. The apostles wrote down a part of the teachings of Christ and a slight sketch of His doings. These writings compose the Scriptures of the New Testament. The unwritten things of their Master the apostles communicated by word of mouth to their hearers, the early Christians, and these are known as traditions. Whatever the Church presents to us for our belief, she has drawn from Holy Scripture and tradition, and hence her doctrines are nothing other than what was originally taught and revealed by God Himself through Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son. Be-

cause the chief objects of our belief are contained in the Holy Scriptures and tradition, these are termed the Sources of Faith.

Thus we know and understand the meaning of the proposition: The faith of the Catholic is a virtue and gift of God, whereby he holds for true and certain whatsoever God has revealed and the Catholic Church holds up for our belief. Remember the words of St. John: "He who heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life" (St. John v. 24).

Example.

We often hear it said that it is unreasonable to believe. The scientist Kirchner had in his study a fine terrestrial globe. A friend who pretended not to believe in the existence of God called on Kirchner, and, admiring the globe, asked who was the maker. Looking at the man earnestly, Kirchner replied: "It made itself." At this answer his friend became angry; whereupon, laying his hand on the man's shoulder, Kirchner said: "You refuse to believe this, and yet you claim that the great sphere it represents made itself, and knows no Creator who called it into existence and harmonized all its parts." And so his friend was forced to admit that it was most unreasonable on his part to disbelieve.

Qualities or Properties of Faith.

A true faith must be universal, steadfast, and living.

1. We must believe all that God has revealed and the Catholic Church believes and teaches. To believe only partially in Him who is all truth is the same as not to believe at all. For if we believe one truth and reject another, we believe not because God is truth, but because it pleases us so to believe. "He that believeth not shall be condemned" (St. Mark xvi. 16). "Whoever does not maintain the Catholic faith entire and unchanged, will without doubt go to everlasting ruin" (St. Athanasius).

2. A firm, unshaken, steadfast faith or belief is only a natural result of the very nature of faith. To better understand this we must remember that there are many sources of evidence; that is to say, many grounds by which we can become convinced of the truth of a thing. These may be drawn from the realms of nature, and are then called natural grounds of belief; or they may be founded above the sphere of nature, and are therefore called supernatural proofs or grounds.

The natural sources of belief are: The testimony of other persons; the testimony of our senses; the testimony of our reason.

We are convinced of a thing on supernatural grounds when we hold to be true whatever God says and because He says it, or when God permits us to see a truth in His light, as is the case with the blessed in heaven.

Now, while our fellow-men, our senses, and our reason may deceive us, if we hold a thing to be true, relying on the testimony of God, we cannot fail, for God is eternal and infallible truth, who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

When the word of the Lord went forth unto Abraham, "Go into a foreign land which I shall show thee," Abraham did not ask, "In what land, O Lord? Who will protect me? How shall I subsist?" He went in obedience and faith, and the Lord rewarded him accordingly.

Example.

During the French Revolution, when the populace, hounded on by the bloodthirsty Jacobins, murdered every priest who fell into their hands, a young priest, fleeing for his life, was captured at Autun. The mayor of the place, wishing to save the young man's life, asked his permission to declare to the populace that he had taken the oath to obey the State in all things. "No," replied the priest; "the same God who forbids me to take the oath forbids me to practise deception by letting these people think that I have signed it." Rather than pre-

tend even to deny his faith he died a martyr's death.

3. It is easy to say: "Lord, I believe; Lord, I doubt nothing." But we must also make our faith a living one by doing good and avoiding evil, as the law prescribes. Good works infuse life into faith. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead" (St. James ii. 26). Christian life is a tree whose vital roots are planted in faith. But if the tree bear no fruit it will be cut down, for it is of no use, be it ever so fair. Now the blossoms and fruits on the tree of Christian life are our works. It is therefore a soul-destroying error to deny the necessity of good works. "By their fruits you shall know them" (St. Matt. vii. 20). "What shall it profit, my brethren, if a man say he hath faith, but hath not works?" (St. James ii. 14).

Example.

The first congregation of Christians consisted of the three thousand persons who were converted by the Apostle Peter at Jerusalem on Pentecost Sunday. These people listened to the instructions of the apostles, prayed together in the temple, and celebrated the holy mysteries in their dwellings. They joined their property together and sold their goods, in order to divide the price in common among one another. This simplicity they maintained unchanged all through three hundred years,

mindful of the admonition of the holy Apostle St. John, who in the later days of his life had himself carried every day into the church, where, from his chair, he addressed the faithful, urging them to love one another. Those of the people who were unable, from want of education, to present the truths of religion with reason and argument or to make discourses, performed good works. They never lost sight of the presence of God: they prayed while ploughing the fields, while navigating the seas and rivers—in short, at all times and places. Submission to the will of God was the leading principle of their lives. How lively was their faith may be inferred from the words of Tertullian when defending them before the pagan judges: “I appeal for evidence to your court records, and refer you to your own experience in judging cases. Is there a judgment recorded against any one of us? Innocence of life is a necessity for us, for we have learned it from God, who is a perfect Lord and Master. People object to us that we are useless in every-day life. Yet we frequent your fairs and markets, your stores, baths, hotels, and other places of business. We transact business, bear arms, and till the soil. True it is that evil persons cannot make use of us.”

Sources of Faith.

HOLY SCRIPTURE.

As has already been said, the teachings of Jesus Christ have been written out, in part, by the apostles, and these writings compose the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Holy Scripture, or the Bible, is divided into two parts, called the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The books of the Old Testament contain those revelations made by God to man from the creation of the world till the time of Christ. These were made chiefly through the patriarchs and prophets, who in turn declared them to the people in word or writing. They are divided into historical, devotional, and prophetic books.

The historical books, twenty-one in number, are: The five books of Moses; the books of Josue, Judges, and Ruth; the four books of Kings; the two books of Chronicles, or Paralipomenon; the books of Esdras, Nehemias, Tobias, Judith, and Esther; and the two books of Machabees. The devotional books are the book of Job; the Psalms; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher; the Canticle of Canticles; the book of Wisdom; and Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus. The seventeen prophetic books are composed chiefly of prophecies concern-

ing the future history of the Jewish people and the coming Messias, Jesus Christ. The prophets are Isaias, Jeremias, Baruch, Ezechiel, Daniel, Osee, Joel, Amos, Abdias, Jonas, Micheas, Nahum, Habacuc, Sophonias, Aggeus, Zacharias, and Malachias.

The New Testament contains the divine revelations as given to us by Jesus Christ Himself. The New Testament is made up of the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; the Acts of the Apostles; the twenty-one Apostolic Epistles, fourteen of them by St. Paul, one by St. James, two by St. Peter, three by St. John, and one by Judas Thaddeus; and the Apocalypse, or Revelations.

The Bible is the treasure-house of our faith and the armory of our holy Church. The Fathers and teachers of the Church have likened it to a letter addressed to mankind by our loving and merciful Father in heaven; and St. Augustine says of it: "From that celestial city out of which we have been withheld till now, has come a letter, telling what God in His love has done for us, and teaching us what we out of love should do for Him."

Whoever would read the Sacred Scriptures for his own instruction and edification must be careful to obtain a correct translation, approved by the local Catholic authorities, a translation accompanied by notes explaining the difficult passages, for in the Bible there are many things "hard to be

understood," as St. Peter says, "and which the unlearned and the unstable wrest to their own destruction" (2 St. Peter iii. 16). Such precautions being taken, the Scriptures may be read with safety and with profit. The Church cannot tolerate the doctrine that each one of us may draw and arrange his faith for himself, for that is not only opposed to the plain letter of the Holy Scriptures itself, but also to the unity of the belief, and therefore sullies and distorts the purity of Christ's doctrines.

TRADITION.

Tradition embraces all those teachings concerning faith and morals imparted by Christ Himself or by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost to the apostles, and which were preached orally, although not committed to writing.

Our Lord did not put His teachings into a written form, nor did He order the apostles to do so. He went about preaching and teaching (St. Matt. iv. 23). To His apostles He simply said: "Go ye into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature. Teach all nations. And they going forth preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the word with signs that followed" (St. Mark xvi. 20). It was preaching, therefore—that is, the verbal expounding of doctrine—which, in conformity to the will of God, was to be the foundation for faith, and not simply writ-

ten forms. "There are many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written" (St. John xxi. 25).

The assumption that the Holy Scripture is the only rule of faith from which every man must draw his belief involves and produces absurd consequences. For instance, what is to become of those persons who cannot procure a copy of the Bible?—and there were millions of such persons before the invention of printing, a modern art. The recognition of tradition as a source of belief, combined with the written word, is as ancient as the Church itself. "It is certain that the apostles in their writings omitted many things which they handed down unwritten and orally; these, too, we are bound to believe" (St. Chrysostom).

The Apostles' Creed.

Having learned the necessary qualities of faith, let us consider the things and truths which the Catholic Church has to believe. These may be summed up in their briefest form in the words: "I believe in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost. Amen." For belief in these three divine Persons embraces and includes within itself belief in the revelations, teachings,

and doings of these three divine Persons. The chief mysteries, those which compose the subject-matter of Christian faith, are set forth in the twelve articles of the Apostles' Creed, or profession of faith, which is nothing other than a development of the above-named form.

This formula of faith is termed a creed or symbol; that is to say, a distinguishing code or sign, by which Christians are known as such to themselves, to one another, and to those who do not believe. It is an acknowledgment or a solemn compact which they utter, and whereby they obligate themselves to a practical profession of their belief. This apostolic symbol is therefore the sworn covenant of the Christians, by which they recognize one another, and which compels them as Christian soldiers to strive bravely under the banner of the Cross for the kingdom of Jesus Christ, as the soldier of the world strives under the banner or ensign that animates and impels him to struggle and die for his country.

This formula of faith is a plain and simple sign or mark, by which Christians are distinguished from non-Christians who profess either no creed at all or else a false and defective one. This formula of belief is called the "Apostles' Creed," because it is highly probable that the apostles themselves compiled it.

Rufinus, a Church historian of the fourth cen-

tury, informs us that the apostles, after the descent of the Holy Ghost, when they were about to disperse to preach the gospel throughout the world, compiled and adopted this formula or creed in order to have a fixed and uniform foundation on which to base their teachings. A legend relates that each apostle made an article, St. Peter making the first, "I believe in God"; St. Andrew, the second; St. James the Greater, the third; St. John, the fourth; St. Thomas, the fifth; St. James the Less, the sixth; St. Philip, the seventh; St. Bartholomew, the eighth; St. Matthew, the ninth; St. Simon, the tenth; St. Thaddeus, the eleventh; and St. Matthias, the twelfth and last.

The place is still shown at Jerusalem where this Creed was composed. It is a kind of recess in the form of a cave, about twenty paces long, its roof consisting of twelve arcades in honor of the twelve apostles.

The different portions of the Apostles' Creed are termed *articles*; that is to say, members, for of such members is the body of the Creed composed. And as the human body when deprived of any one of its members is seriously disturbed and disabled, so is the whole body of the faith paralyzed when even one article is denied. The name Creed is derived from the first word of the formula, *Credo*, which is Latin for "I believe."

It is not enough for us merely to repeat the

Apostles' Creed with our lips, without adverting to its senses word after word, or at least article by article. We ought to repeat it with attention and reflection every day, if possible; and to whom is it impossible if there be an earnest will? We can kneel down, place ourselves in the presence of God, and go over the Creed article after article, meditating carefully on each one. Thus, for example, we say: "I believe in God the Father." Then we ask ourselves: Have I believed firmly, under all circumstances? Have I always avoided whatever might rob me of my belief or weaken it, such company, such reading, such thoughts? Have I prayed constantly for the grace of faith? Have I thanked God because I believe in Him? Then we may dwell on the word *God*. Who is He and who am I? He is my Father: Father to my body, Father to my soul. Am I an obedient child? Am I a good father to my children? Do I give to them and to others under me good example both in word and works? Then we may make our resolutions and draw our conclusions, and then proceed to the next point.

Whoever will thus meditate on the Creed will reap a harvest of faith and other virtues.

Sins Against Faith.

IDOLATRY.

This sin above all is forbidden by the first commandment. It is committed by the heathen, who change the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds and of four-footed beasts, and of creeping things (Rom. i. 23). Those who have fallen into this fatal error are called idolaters, and their images, idols. But men also have been taken for gods, and have had divine honors paid to them, as, for instance, Herod, of whom the Acts of the Apostles speak. When the ambassadors of the Tyrians and Sidonians came to him, he wanted to parade his glory before them, and upon a day appointed, being arrayed in kingly apparel, he sat in the judgment seat, and made an oration to them. And the people made acclamation, saying: "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man." Herod countenanced all this, and accepted the homage. "And forthwith an angel of the Lord struck him, because he had not given the honor to God: and being eaten up by worms, he gave up the ghost" (Acts xii. 21-23).

The Jews, who were surrounded by heathen nations, constantly fell into idolatry. Very shortly after they had received the Ten Commandments,

when Moses was still with God in the mount, and they thought he had left them and would not return, they asked Aaron to make gods for them who would precede them. Aaron was weak enough to give in to them, and made a golden calf, and allowed them to sacrifice to it (Exod. xxxii. 1-6). And although they were severely punished, for the Levites killed 23,000 of them, the Israelites frequently relapsed into idolatry. The law commanded that not only those were to be put to death who sacrificed to idols, but also those who led others into idolatry (Deut. xiii. 10).

This is idolatry in its gross form. But there is another refined form of idolatry, of which we have spoken when treating of the love of God (p. 26).

As this gross idolatry is a complete estrangement from God, its necessary consequence is lapse into sin and vice and all the passions of natural man unaided by grace.

Thus the Apostle Peter says of the heathen: "They have walked in riotousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and unlawful worshipping of idols" (1 St. Peter iv. 3).

UNBELIEF.

Unbelief is the absence of faith. If this is not caused by our own fault, as with those who are not born in the Church and have never heard of the true

faith, it is a misfortune. But if anybody falls into unbelief through his own fault, he incurs eternal damnation. "He that doth not believe is already judged" (St. John iii. 18).

HERESY.

A heretic is a man who believes differently from what the Church teaches. Here, as well, there is culpable and non-culpable heresy. Heresy, when not wilful, is no sin as long as there exists the good will of accepting the known truth. Very different is culpable error or wilful heresy, which rests on two things: error of the intellect, and stubbornness of the will. With heretics of this class we may not have any intercourse, according to the words of the apostle: "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid" (Tit. iii. 10).

INDIFFERENCE IN MATTERS OF FAITH.

Of this sin all those persons are guilty who think that all religions are equally good, and only differ in matters of no consequence; moreover, all those Catholic Christians who contract mixed marriages and allow their children to be brought up in a false religion. The same kind of sin is committed by those who take part in non-Catholic services.

LOSS OF FAITH.

It is easy to fall into unbelief, heresy, and indifference if we do not constantly endeavor to cultivate the precious gift of faith within us, and instantly ask God for it. Furthermore, we incur this danger when we entertain wilful doubts against faith, when we raise such doubts in ourselves, and, instead of asking our pastor or confessor to instruct us, and humbly submitting to the Church, we brood over them, and foster them within us, and communicate them to others.

Sins against faith are also caused by the perusal of books which contain a different doctrine from that of the Catholic Church, or attack the Catholic religion, its doctrines, precepts, customs, practices, etc. A Catholic Christian may not only not read these kinds of books, but is bound to destroy them. If he lends them to others, he commits grievous sin as many times as he lends them, or as others get these books into their hands through his fault and read them. The same holds good of magazines and newspapers.

It is the duty of a Catholic Christian to avoid not only heretics, but also those Catholics who hold discourses and conversation contrary to our faith, although they may allege that they are Catholics. With such men we must not have any intercourse,

but rather consider the word of the apostle: "Mark them who cause dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them" (Rom. xvi. 17).

If a man do not guard the precious gift of faith, it is gradually weakened in him, till the result is inward loss of faith, and in the end also exterior falling away from the faith—apostasy.

Examples.

When the Church not only prohibits the reading of bad and anti-Catholic books and writings, but makes it a duty for us to destroy them, she does no more than was enjoined on the early Christians. When St. Paul preached at Ephesus, many of them who had followed curious arts brought together their books and burnt them before all; and counting the price of them they found the money to be 50,000 pieces of silver, *i.e.*, about \$7,900 (Acts xix. 19). The faithful were strictly forbidden to read pagan books, as we see from the Apostolic Constitutions. In the First General Council of Nicea the writings of the hereisarch Arius were condemned, and the Emperor Constantine caused all of them to be burnt, and threatened everybody with death who would not give them up. In the Council of Ephesus the Fathers petitioned the Emperor Theodosius that he would cause the writings of Nestorius to be consigned to the flames. Pope Leo I. burnt with his

own hands the Manichean books at Rome, and wrote to the bishops enjoining them to do the same.

SUPERSTITION.

Superstition is another sin against faith. The gravity of this sin depends on the amount of knowledge which the superstitious person possesses, and on the more or less criminal end he wishes to attain. The most sinful form of superstition is witchcraft, which consists in invoking the help of the devil or some evil spirit in order to gain riches by digging for treasures, or to learn hidden things, or to do harm to any one. There have been persons who made a covenant with the devil, and gave themselves up to him, whether they really held intercourse with the Evil One or only had the intention of doing so, and who invoked his aid in order to obtain worldly goods.

There are also people who believe that their children or their cattle can be bewitched; that there are men who by an "evil eye" can harm our bodies. Those try to expel the witches by other superstitious remedies. Then there arises false suspicion, and the most hideous crimes are committed when people think they have found the witch. This mania was rife in Germany, especially, 200 years ago, and more so in the Protestant than in the Catholic states. Thousands of men, women,

girls, and even children were accused of having caused misfortunes, for instance, hail-storms, diseases, cattle-plagues, bad seasons, etc. Confessions were extorted from them by the most horrible tortures, and afterwards they were given up to a most painful death, generally by burning. This deplorable superstition has not quite died out yet among the people. Poor old women, especially, are often suspected of being witches and made to suffer for it. This is a sinful folly. Holy Church furnishes the Christian with the arms with which he can combat witchcraft, incantation, and all influence of the Evil One. They are the sign of the cross, holy water, and blessed objects. Let the faithful, therefore, commend themselves, their bodies and their goods, to the protection of God and be in peace.

In modern times there has spread, especially among the higher classes of society, a new form of superstition, which we find already in the Old Testament visited with severe punishments. It consists in consulting the spirits of the dead in order to obtain news or any other kind of information from them. The persons who carry on such nonsense, as a rule, belong to a class who do not believe in anything supernatural, or in any mystery of religion,—in fact, have no religion at all. Of these the saying is true: "The most unbelieving are the most credulous."

FORTUNE-TELLING AND INTERPRETATION OF
DREAMS.

God in His great wisdom has hidden coming events from us and has left us in uncertainty as to our future fate. He does not wish us to be cast down by impending misfortunes, or elated by anticipated success. We are to leave our life in the hands of God and work out our salvation. Therefore we sin against God by trying to lift the veil which covers the future, or by prying into things which God has thought good to hide from us. This is chiefly done by fortune-telling and interpretation of dreams. He who without having received a divine revelation takes upon himself to tell things which cannot be known according to the natural order, or attempts to inquire into those things, has his fortune told, or his dreams interpreted, and seriously believes in all this, sins grievously, and fortune-tellers and interpreters of dreams doubly so if they practise their craft for mercenary purposes. Fortune-tellers pretend to gather their knowledge from the lines in the palm of the hand, as we find gypsies doing. Others pour melted lead into water and interpret the shapes it assumes; others again read the future in tea-leaves; one of the most common methods of finding out things which we are anxious to know is by cutting cards. All these

things and others of the same class are opposed to the virtue of faith. Also

VAIN OBSERVANCE,

or the idle custom of expecting help from things which neither by the will of God, nor by their natural power, nor through the prayers of the Church can help us. Thus, for instance, superstitious people fancy they can prophesy good or bad fortune from the cry of birds, the howling of dogs, the call of the cuckoo, the falling out of teeth, and other natural phenomena. Others claim that they have made themselves proof against blows, thrusts, and bullets. Or they use certain remedies against diseases—for instance, the wearing of papers on which certain words or ciphers are written; or they suggest the use of natural remedies accompanied by extraordinary proceedings—for instance, throwing a remedy over one's shoulder into a stream at a certain phase of the moon in order to get rid of a fever or some other illness, and numberless follies of the same kind. This kind of cure they call "cure by sympathy."

There is an innocent kind of "sympathetic cure" in which neither anything forbidden nor foolish is employed. If we wish to try such a cure, we must formally protest to ourselves that we do not wish to obtain anything contrary to the will of God.

It is likewise sinful to believe in lucky or un-

lucky days, and to model our conduct accordingly. So, for instance, Friday is supposed to be an unlucky day, in which one is not to do anything of importance. And yet Friday is the most blessed day of all, for it is the day of our Redemption. It is true that on Good Friday we are not to do anything contrary to the spirit of the Church, which recommends us to dwell on that day with special devotion on the bitter passion and death of Jesus Christ.

SUPERSTITIOUS PRAYERS.

There are also superstitious, and therefore sinful, prayers and books—for instance, such in which we are assured for certain that, as often as we recite them, a poor soul is set free, or that we are preserved from certain diseases, or that we cannot be lost if we say them every day. The prayers or the books in which these prayers are contained ought to be given to a priest or destroyed. On the contrary, it is not sinful, but rather praiseworthy, to wear objects blessed by the Church, especially scapulars and medals of Our Lady. For we do not ascribe any power to them, but by wearing them we place ourselves under the protection of our blessed Lady, whom we wish to honor, and in whose intercession we hope and trust.

Holy Scripture speaks in these words of the different forms of superstition :

“Neither let there be found among you any one that consulteth soothsayers, or observeth dreams and omens, neither let there be any wizard, or any one that seeketh the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth all these things, and for these abominations He will destroy them” (Deut. xviii. 10-12).

“Learn not according to the ways of the Gentiles: and be not afraid of the signs of heaven, which the heathens fear” (Jer. x. 2).

“The hopes of a man that is void of understanding are vain and deceitful: and dreams lift up fools. The man that giveth heed to lying visions is like to him that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind. Deceitful visions and lying omens and the dreams of evil-doers are vanity. For dreams have deceived many, and they have failed that put their trust in them” (Ecclus. xxxiv. 1, 2, 5, 7).

“Wizards thou shalt not suffer to live” (Exod. xx. 18).

“Sorcerers shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Apoc. xxi. 8).

Warning Examples.

King Saul had fallen away from the Lord, and God had withdrawn His grace from him. When he was going to war with the Philistines, this once

courageous warrior was filled with fear, and went to Endor to an old woman who had the reputation of being able to conjure up the spirits of the dead. Of this woman Saul begged that she would call up the Prophet Samuel, in order that he might inquire of him. But when the woman began her foolery, God raised up the spirit of Samuel in reality, and he declared the will of God to Saul for his punishment, and foretold him that he should be defeated in the battle against the Philistines, and lose his life, and that the kingdom should be given to David (1 Kings xxviii. 16-19). After the death of Solomon ten tribes rebelled against his son, and God gave them Jeroboam for a king. But he did not walk before the Lord, and led his subjects also into idolatry. In order to deter them from going up to the Temple at Jerusalem, as it was commanded, he set up two golden calves, one at Dan and one at Bethel, on the confines of his country, and said: "Behold thy gods, O Israel, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt" (3 Kings xii. 28). And the people went to adore. But the Lord sent word to him through the Prophet Ahias: "Because thou hast made thee strange gods and molten gods, to provoke Me to anger, and hast cast Me behind thy back: therefore, behold I will bring evils upon the house of Jeroboam . . . and I will sweep away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as dung is swept away till all be clean" (3 Kings xiv. 9, 10). And

the Lord did as He had threatened. Jeroboam was defeated by Abias, king of Juda, in a bloody battle. There fell wounded of Israel five hundred thousand valiant men, and Jeroboam lost many cities, which he never recovered (2 Par. xiii. 17). Ochozias, king of Israel, was grievously sick and sent to Accaron to consult the god Beelzebub on the issue of his sickness. But God sent Elias to meet the messengers and to say to them: "Is there not a God in Israel, that ye go to consult Beelzebub, the god of Accaron? . . . Go and return to the king that sent you, and you shall say to him: . . . Thou shalt not come down from the bed on which thou art gone up, but thou shalt surely die" (4 Kings i. 2-6). When St. Paul preached Jesus Crucified to the proconsul Sergius, Elymas the magician tried to turn away the proconsul from the faith. But Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, looking upon him, said: "O full of all guile and of all deceit, child of the devil, enemy of all justice, thou ceasest not to pervert the right ways of the Lord. And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a time. And immediately there fell a mist and darkness upon him [Elymas], and going about, he sought some one to lead him by the hand" (Acts xiii. 10, 11).

Thus God punishes all who do not put their trust in Him, and rebel against His commandments.

SACRILEGE.

Sacrilege is the profanation of objects or places dedicated to God, or ill-usage of the persons consecrated to God. Such sacred things are: Chalices, monstrances, and all vessels dedicated to the service of the Church, as, for instance, crucifixes, images and statues of saints, and especially their relics. By holy places we mean churches, chapels, cemeteries. Consecrated persons are those who have received Holy Orders, or have dedicated themselves by special vows to the service of God, such as priests, monks, and nuns.

Therefore all those sin grievously:

1. Who receive the sacraments unworthily;
2. Who profane holy communion, the holy cross, the relics of the saints, their images or statues;
3. Who commit a sin of impurity with a person consecrated to God,
4. Who defile blessed objects and consecrated vessels, or use them for profane purposes;
5. Who purloin or steal objects destined for the service of God, and more especially those who confiscate Church property, or alienate pious foundations from their original purpose;
6. Who buy ecclesiastical lands and buildings which have been unjustly taken from the Church;

7. Who buy and sell relics for mercenary purposes, or circulate false ones;

8. Who pay money or offer other bribes in order to intrude themselves into ecclesiastical offices and dignities, for instance, to obtain a living. This sin is called simony, because Simon Magus offered money to St. Peter in order to obtain the power of bestowing the Holy Ghost (Acts viii. 19);

9. Who pervert the words of Holy Scripture, or use them mockingly and flippantly;

10. Who mimic ecclesiastical functions or ecclesiastical persons, or sing parodies to the airs of Church hymns;

11. Churches and churchyards are desecrated by the commission of acts of impurity, murder, or bloodshed; moreover, by the burying of a heathen, a Jew, an infidel, or a person who has been excommunicated by the sentence of ecclesiastical authority;

12. Who ill-use consecrated persons, *i.e.*, ecclesiastics, clerics, or religious.

Warning Examples.

Baltassar, king of Babylon, once made a great feast to which the nobles of his empire were invited, and they all drank very freely. The king himself, when he was intoxicated, commanded that they should bring the vessels of gold and silver

which Nabuchodonosor, his father, had brought away out of the Temple. Then were the golden and silver vessels brought, and the king and his nobles and his wives drank in them. In the same night he fell into the hands of his enemies and was slain (Dan. v.). Heliodorus, treasurer of Seleucus, king of Syria, had received a commission from his master to go to Jerusalem and seize the rich treasure of the Temple. He went, therefore, himself with his guard to the treasury. But the spirit of the Almighty God gave a great evidence of His presence, so that all that had presumed to obey him, falling down by the power of God, were struck with fainting and dread. For there appeared to them a horse with a terrible rider upon him, adorned with a very rich covering: and he ran fiercely and struck Heliodorus with his fore-feet, and he that sat upon him seemed to have armor of gold. Moreover, there appeared two other young men, beautiful and strong, bright and glorious, and in comely apparel, who stood by him on either side, and scourged him without ceasing with many stripes. And Heliodorus suddenly fell to the ground, and they took him up covered with great darkness, and having put him into a litter, they carried him out. So he that came with many servants, and all his guards into the aforesaid treasury, was carried out, no one being able to help him, the manifest power of God being known. And he, indeed, by the power

of God, lay speechless, and without all hope of recovery (2 Mach. iii. 24-29).

The Lord decreed a dreadful punishment over Jerusalem through the mouth of the Prophet Ezechiel: "Because thou hast violated My sanctuary with all thy offences and with all thy abominations, My eye shall not spare, and I will not have any pity. A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and shall be consumed with famine in the midst of thee: and a third part of thee shall fall by the sword round about thee: and a third part of thee will I scatter in every wind, and I will draw out a sword after them" (Ezech. v. 11, 12). We know in what awful manner this threat was fulfilled in the subsequent history of the Jews. Our Lord Himself in holy anger made a scourge of cords and drove the buyers and sellers with it from the court of the Temple (St. Matt. xxi. 12).

Exterior Worship.

As we have already observed, interior worship leads to exterior worship. In the same way as faith in God is, so to speak, inborn in man, the tendency of showing exterior worship is implanted in his soul.

1. Our bodies as well as our souls belong to the Lord, and are created for His service, and this

entails the duty of external worship. It is only just and fair that we should not merely adore God in our soul, but that we should also glorify Him in our body. Therefore the Apostle exhorts us: "Know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost? Glorify and bear God in your body" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20).

We worship God externally when we join our hands in praying; when we kneel down at our prayers, or show our reverence to the Most Holy Sacrament; when we bend our head in pronouncing the name of Jesus—in short, as often as we express by any outward sign, gesture, or movement of our body, etc., the feeling of reverence which we bear in our heart.

2. Certain modes of exterior worship have been enjoined upon us by the commandments, viz., by the third commandment of the Decalogue: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day," and by the commandments of the Church, which decree at what times, in which places, and by what exercises God is to be specially honored.

There are people who deny the necessity of such exterior worship, and, in support of their opinions, they quote the discourse of Jesus Christ with the Samaritan woman by Jacob's well, in which He predicted that a time should come when people would adore neither in Jerusalem nor in Mount

Garizim, which prophecy was afterwards fulfilled, for both temples, the one at Garizim as well as the one at Jerusalem, were destroyed. But when Our Saviour adds, "The hour cometh and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father also seeketh such to adore Him" (St. John iv. 23), His words do not condemn exterior worship, but He pronounces it to be of no value unless it proceed from a right spirit.

God Himself gave to the Jews the minutest instructions as to their religious worship, and He Himself fulfilled the precepts of the law by going at the appointed time to Jerusalem for the feast, and by eating the Paschal lamb with His disciples according to the law, before He suffered.

3. We must consider well that a recollected outward demeanor at our prayers is the best help towards that devotion with which we are to worship God inwardly. When we kneel down in saying our prayers, and humbly cast down our eyes, join our hands, and beat our breast, we arouse in ourselves those pious dispositions from which prayer draws its real value. This conduct, moreover, serves for the edification of our neighbor, and invites him, as it were, likewise to renounce all worldly thoughts and to turn to God. Such a good example is a good work at the same time.

Application.

1. The best kind of exterior worship is a pious and upright life which faithfully observes the commandments of God and of His Church, and thus shows outwardly what faith and the grace of God have wrought in the interior man. By devotions at home, by the diligent reception of the sacraments, by zealously frequenting the services of the Church, we let others see that we put our trust in God.

2. But we must, moreover, strive to propagate the knowledge and worship of God among our fellow-men. Besides giving good example, we can do this chiefly by kind instructions and pious, edifying conversations, by which we circumvent the Evil One and further the honor of God. "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31).

Examples.

One day when Moses kept the flocks of Jethro, his father-in-law, "the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he saw that the bush was on fire, and was not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he went forward to see, He called to him out of the midst of the bush and said: Moses, Moses. And he answered: Here I am. And He said: Come not nigh hither, put off the shoes from thy feet: for the place whereon thou

standest is holy ground" (Exod. iii. 2, 4-5). Thus God Himself required of Moses exterior marks of reverence. David invited the children of Israel to give praise and thanks to the Lord, saying: "Come, let us adore and fall down" (Ps. xlv. 6). When Solomon dedicated the Temple he had built, he stood upon a brazen scaffold: then kneeling down in the presence of all the multitude of Israel, and lifting up his hands towards heaven, he implored God that He would hear all those who should pray in the Temple (2 Par. vi. 13). Even in heaven exterior worship is offered to God. St. John saw the Lord sitting upon a throne and before Him four living creatures, and round about the throne four-and-twenty ancients sitting, clothed in white garments, and on their heads were crowns of gold. And when those living creatures gave glory and honor and benediction to Him that sitteth on the throne, who liveth forever and ever, the four-and-twenty ancients fell down before Him that sitteth on the throne, and adored Him that liveth forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne (Apoc. iv. 9, 10).

Hope.

Together with faith, God gives us the virtue of hope, which the Holy Ghost likewise infuses into our soul in Baptism. It is therefore a supernatural gift which enables us to hope. Through this virtue

we desire and expect eternal salvation, and all that is necessary for obtaining it: pardon of our sins, and divine grace, the means of obtaining eternal life.

1. The exercise of hope presupposes the existence of faith. We cannot hope for or expect anything divine and supernatural without having apprehended it by faith. He who does not believe cannot hope. "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for" (Heb. xi. 1).

2. The essence of hope is desire and confidence. We desire something in our prayers, and then we trust that God will grant our desires. We may expect this not only because God is infinitely good and merciful, but also because He Himself has taught us to pray and has promised to hear our prayers. We know that God keeps His promises: He is faithful. "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering (for He is faithful that hath promised)" (Heb. x. 23).

3. We may hope for the pardon of our sins, however great they may be, provided that we are truly sorry for them, and resolved to do penance as far as lies in our power. We must never give up hope, for Jesus Christ intercedes for us with the Father. "He is able to save forever them that come to God by Him, always living to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25).

4. God gives us the means necessary for gaining

eternal salvation. He bestows grace on us, that we may resist evil and accomplish good. It is true that many a thing seems hard to us, but God gives us His own strength, so that we can say with St. Paul: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will also make with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. x. 13).

5. Although we may firmly hope and trust that God forgives us our sins if we sincerely repent of them, this hope must be accompanied by fear. But we must not fear that God may not have pardoned our sins, but rather that we may not have done our part to earn this pardon. This fear ought to keep us always watchful, and preserve us from false security.

Therefore the Apostle admonishes us in these words: "With fear and trembling work out your salvation" (Phil. ii. 12).

We may also pray for and hope to obtain from the mercy of God temporal goods, such as health, a sufficient income, peace in our family, provision for our children, etc. For Christ has given a place to the petition for our daily bread in the "Our Father." But we may only ask to obtain them as far as it is in accordance with the will of God and conducive to our salvation. The petition for our

daily bread is not the first, but the fourth of the "Our Father," and it is the only one which refers to temporal blessings. Our thought should aspire above all to the attainment of heavenly goods, and everything else should be subordinate to them. The rest we may leave in the hands of God, who knows all we stand in need of. "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matt. vi. 33).

Application.

1. Let us place all our hope in God, and in God alone. He is our only helper. And although all men may forsake us, God does not forsake those who trust in Him. Let us therefore say with the Psalmist: "I cried to Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my hope, my portion in the land of the living" (Ps. cxli. 6).

Let us remember how gracious and merciful the Lord has been to us hitherto. He has taken care of us from the first moment of our existence. He has helped us so far, and He will help us still further. Let us not lose courage, but let us say: "Why art thou sad, O my soul? and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him" (Ps. xli. 6).

3. But let us beware lest we become careless in the affair of our salvation. Even the most holy

have cause for anxiety. Let us be watchful, for "your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour" (1 St. Peter v. 8).

4. Hope must not only live in our heart, but, like the theological virtue of faith, it ought to be frequently exercised in order that it may be strengthened by such an act of confidence. Our acts of hope should in a special manner express our confidence in the merits of Jesus Christ, which alone have acquired the forgiveness of our sins and all heavenly graces for us. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin" (1 St. John i. 7).

Examples.

We find a beautiful example of strong hope in holy Job. In the midst of his pains and sufferings, which, according to human foresight, could not be relieved by any one, he said: "Although He should kill me, I will trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15). When the relatives and friends of Tobias mocked him and said: "Where is thy hope, for which thou gavest alms, and buriedst the dead?" he answered: "Speak not so, for we are the children of saints, and look for that life which God will give to those that never change their faith from Him" (Tob. ii. 16-18). The woman of Chanaan would not be rebuked by the seemingly harsh words of Our Lord, "It is not good to take the bread of the children,

"His parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the pasch."—St. Luke ii. 41.



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"They found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day.
And the Lord said to Moses: Let that man die."—Num. xv. 32, 35.

THIRD COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

“Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.”

REFLECTION.—All our days belong to God who has made us, and it is our duty to devote them all to His service. Although we might do this without neglecting the obligations devolving on us on account of our state of life, of our position in society, nevertheless God has specially reserved to His service one day in the week, in which He bids us rest from our usual occupations and which He directs us to keep holy. This day is the Sunday, which the Church, by the power conferred on her by Christ Himself, has ordered to take the place of the Jewish Sabbath, and on which she commands us to hear Mass.

PRACTICE.—Let us on Sundays and festivals abstain from all unnecessary servile work, from all dangerous amusements, and, besides devoutly assisting at the whole of Mass, let us hear the word of God and devote some portion of the day to the reading of good books and Catholic periodicals.

PRAYER.—O my God, I am resolved to spend the Sunday in a Christian manner and to devote it principally to honoring Thee and attending seriously to my eternal salvation. O Mary, my dear Mother, help me to sanctify the Sundays and festivals. Amen.

and to cast it to the dogs," but said: "Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters" (St. Matt. xv. 27). The thief on the right hand of Our Saviour well knew that he received the just punishment of his deeds, yet full of confidence he addressed to Our Lord the following petition: "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom" (St. Luke xxiii. 42), and he was not disappointed in his hope.

Sins Against Hope.

We sin against hope by want of confidence, false confidence, carelessness with regard to our salvation, presumption, and despair.

1. We must have so firm a confidence in God that our hope is not shaken even if for a time everything should seem to fail. And if our help should tarry for ever so long, we know that our prayer shall be heard on the day when it shall be good for us. If this be true of our bodily needs, how much more will it be so of our spiritual ones. For it was to redeem us from our spiritual need that Our Saviour offered His life and His blood. "In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Eph. i. 7).

2. But as on the one hand we must not be distrustful and pusillanimous, on the other we must

not give ourselves up to a false confidence and believe that we cannot be lost because God is kind and merciful. Such a false confidence would destroy the zeal for our salvation in us and lead us to a carelessness which would most probably end in the loss of our soul, as it would be hardly possible to keep ourselves from grievous sin. But our ruin would be quite certain if we were to continue in sin, trusting in the longanimity, goodness, and mercy of God. This presumption is a sin against the Holy Ghost. "Add not sin upon sin, and say not: The mercy of the Lord is great, He will have mercy on the multitude of my sins. For mercy and wrath quickly come from Him, and His wrath looketh upon sinners" (Ecclus. v. 5-7).

3. It is an equally grievous sin to despair of the mercy of God, and give up all hope of obtaining pardon of our sins and the means necessary to salvation. This would be denying the mercy of God in the same way as the presumptuous denies His justice. Such despair is very often the source of many other sins. The despairing man thinks: "It is quite indifferent what I do, I am lost in any case; nothing worse can happen to me; I am damned already; why should I struggle when it is of no use?"—and plunges recklessly into all vices. This is also a sin against the Holy Ghost, who says by the mouth of the Prophet Isaias: "Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices

from My eyes: cease to do perversely, learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge for the fatherless, defend the widow. And then come and accuse Me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow: and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool" (Is. i. 16-18).

Application.

1. When the Prophet Jonas was asked by the mariners who he was, which was his country, and whither he went, he answered: "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord the God of heaven, who made both the sea and the dry land" (Jonas i. 9). Jonas declared by these words that the first and supreme object of his life was to confess the one, true, living God, to fear Him, and to walk in His presence. This Hebrew puts all those men to shame who never reflect upon their destination, who have no thought for any one but themselves, and set aside all the commandments if they can procure their well-being by doing so. Just as Jonas said: "I am a Hebrew and fear the Lord," every Christian ought to say: "I am a Christian, and faith in the true God is the light which guides and directs me. In this light I will walk as long as I live. I fear God, and Him alone will I serve."

2. Faith in the one God, who led the Israelites out of the land of bondage into the Land of Prom-

ise, and will lead us through the desert of this mortal life, will also preserve us from trusting in man. It will keep us from placing our hope and confidence in poor, erring, fickle creatures, who, however exalted their position in this world may seem, cannot help us in the gravest hour of our life, in that hour where we must give an account whether we have understood our task here below and have striven after the one eternal God and His kingdom. Woe to us if our faith and our works have been vain! Let us say, therefore, with David: "It is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God" (Ps. lxxii. 28).

Examples.

When the Israelites had no water in the desert, Moses received from God a command to strike the rock in order to cause water to flow from it. But he doubted whether the water would really spring forth, because the Israelites had shown themselves unworthy of the divine mercy by their murmurings. He was punished for this want of confidence by being allowed only to see the Promised Land from afar off, but not to enter it (Deut. xxxii. 51, 52). The Pharisees thought they could not lose the kingdom of God because they were descended from Abraham and were Abraham's sons. St. John the Baptist said to them: "Bring forth worthy fruits of penance. And think not to say within

yourselves, We have Abraham for our father" (St. Matt. iii. 8, 9). Cain despaired of God's mercy when he exclaimed: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon" (Gen. iv. 13). Judas also despaired and hanged himself. St. Paul says of the Gentiles: "Having their understanding darkened, being alienated from a life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts. Who, despairing, have given themselves up to lasciviousness, and unto the working of uncleanness" (Eph. iv. 18, 19).

The Veneration of the Saints.

It is true that the first commandment enjoins that we are not to have strange gods before the one true God, and are not to make an image or likeness of creatures, to adore them or serve them (Exod. xx. 3-5). By these words we are not, however, forbidden to honor the saints of God, for we neither adore nor serve them.

1. The saints of God certainly are mere creatures. But they have been called by God to His service, and have followed their vocations, and are therefore numbered among the elect. They have co-operated with the grace bestowed upon them and have served God faithfully. They have struggled and fought and have now received their crown. Therefore God Himself has honored them, and Our Saviour has

promised expressly that He would honor those with the highest honor who should serve Him with fidelity. "To him that shall overcome, I will give to sit with Me in My throne: as I also have overcome, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Apoc. iii. 21). "If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honor" (St. John xii. 26).

2. If, according to the words of the Apostle, honor is due to every one who does good, why should it not be accorded above all to the saints, who more than any one else have done good and avoided evil, and have thus become our models? "Glory and honor and peace to every one that worketh good" (Rom. ii. 10).

However, this veneration cannot be compared in the remotest degree to the worship which belongs to God, and which we render to Him alone. We adore God, because He is the Most High and the Only One. The saints, however great the perfection to which they have attained, have become what they are through the power of God alone. They were men like ourselves, and it is by the grace of God that they have become saints. But the Lord is of Himself and through Himself. He is the Source of all good, of all perfection, of all life, of all grace. Therefore the twenty-four ancients before the throne of God exclaim in adoration: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, our God, to receive glory, and honor, and power: because Thou hast

created all things, and for Thy will they were, and have been created" (Apoc. iv. 11).

3. We are not only to venerate the saints for their virtues, but we may address ourselves to them as to friends of God, and ask their intercession. We are to invoke more especially the great Mother of God, whom Our Lord, when He was hanging on the cross, gave to us to be a mother to all Christians; St. Joseph, the protector of Christendom and patron of our last hour; our holy guardian angel; the patron saint in whose name we are baptized; the patron saint of the church where we received Baptism, and the patron saint of our parish church, if he be a different one.

4. We may also make images of the saints and pray before them, for we pray to God, and only ask the saints to help our prayer by their intercession. We represent the saints as they were on earth, or as we imagine them to have been: for instance, St. Martin and St. Sebastian as soldiers, St. Nicholas as a bishop, St. Anthony as a hermit, St. Isidore as a shepherd, etc. These images are only intended to remind us more vividly of them. Therefore the Roman Catechism says: "But as Christ the Lord, and His most holy and most pure Mother, and all the other saints, having been endued with human nature, bore the human form, it is not only not forbidden by this commandment to paint and honor their images, but it has always been deemed a holy

practice, and a most certain proof of a grateful mind; a position which is confirmed by the monuments of the apostolic age, general councils, and the writings of so many holy and very learned Fathers, who are of one accord upon the subject."

God Himself commanded Moses to place over the Ark of the Covenant two golden cherubim, who were to spread their wings and cover the oracle (Exod. xxv. 18).

And when, after the Israelites had entered the Promised Land, Solomon built the Temple, he also caused two cherubim to be placed over the Ark in the Holy of Holies, and others to be carved in the wall (3 Kings vi. 23-29).

As far back as the second century we find in the catacombs images of the saints and of the holy Mother of God. The Emperor Constantine caused a cross to be erected in the most prominent spot of his palace. St. Jerome says of St. Paula: "Prostrate before the cross, she adored as if she saw the Redeemer of the world hanging thereon." The Fathers and Doctors of the Church have approved and recommended the use of images.

Thus St. Basil says: "I venerate the holy apostles, prophets, and martyrs, and invoke them in the prayers which I address to God, in order that through them, *i.e.*, through their intercession, God may be gracious to me, and I, too, may obtain remission of my sins. Therefore I reverently kiss

their images, for apostolic tradition does not prohibit their use, but rather sanctions the custom of placing them in the churches."

St. Gregory the Great says: "Paintings are placed in the churches, in order that those who cannot read may at least learn from the pictures what they cannot read in books."

St. Germanus: "The images of the saints are incentives to virtue in the same way as edifying discourses are; a picture is a compressed history, which directs our thoughts towards our heavenly Father. It is without cause that people take scandal at the custom of burning incense or candles before the images of saints, for these are only symbols which represent the virtues of the saints, *i.e.*, their illumination by the Holy Spirit, and the divine inspirations with which they have been favored."

5. We may also honor the relics of the saints. By relics we principally mean the bodies of the saints, either the whole body or some of its principal parts, as, for instance, the head, arm, hand, etc.; or smaller particles, as, for instance, pieces of the holy cross, or of the bones of saints. Pieces of their garments are also called relics. The body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. It has been sanctified in holy Baptism, and anointed with holy oil and chrism. The body was the instrument of the soul in the service of God, and shall be reunited to

it on the last day, and share the glory of heaven. The articles which the saints have used or worn about their person are as sacred to us as the relics of our dear relations, whose hair, rings, kerchiefs, and other property we keep as souvenirs. We often hear of sticks, swords, and spectacles, snuff-boxes, inkstands, pens, etc. of famous men being sold at a high price. People try to preserve the rooms in which such men pursued their studies, or in which they died, in the same condition in which they were found on the day of their death. But the saints are the most famous of all men, and their possessions are priceless souvenirs. It has never been heard that the inkstand of Luther, the crutch-stick of Frederick the Great, or the little gray hat of Napoleon has worked miracles. But miracles *were* wrought in the ages of the Old Testament by the bones, garments, or kerchiefs of the saints, and miracles, wonderful cures, extraordinary answers to prayer have at all times been obtained through relics. Not only have many of these miracles happened in the presence of great multitudes of the faithful, but they have been most carefully examined and confirmed both by secular and ecclesiastical authorities. 'Therefore St. Jerome exclaims: "Happy the town in which only one saint lies buried! For his body, which has suffered for Christ, pleads without ceasing with God, and his pleading is heard."

The Church Teaches Us the Way of Honoring the Saints.

The best way of finding out how the saints are to be honored is to study the prayers of the Church.

All the prayers in which she makes mention of the saints are addressed to God, and the saints are expressly designated there as intercessors, not as mediators, for there is only one Mediator—Jesus Christ.

Therefore nearly all her prayers end with these words: "Through Our Lord Jesus Christ."

In the holy Mass the saints are several times mentioned. At the beginning the priest confesses his sinfulness and beseeches the blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, to pray for him to the Lord our God.

After ascending the altar steps he says, with his hands joined: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, by the merits of Thy saints, that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to forgive me all my sins."

After the Lavabo the priest says: "May they intercede for us in heaven, whose memory we celebrate on earth."

In the Canon of the holy Mass itself the saints are remembered three times, before and after the Consecration, and before the breaking of the sacred Host. The petitions are as follows:

Before the Consecration :

“Communicating with and honoring in the first place the memory of the glorious and ever virgin Mary, Mother of Our Lord and God Jesus Christ: as also of the blessed apostles and martyrs, . . . and of all Thy saints, by whose merits and prayers grant that we may be always defended by the help of Thy protection. Through the same Christ Our Lord. Amen.”

After the Consecration :

“And to us sinners, Thy servants, hoping in the multitude of Thy mercies, vouchsafe to grant some part and fellowship with Thy holy apostles and martyrs; . . . into whose company we beseech Thee to admit us, not considering our merits, but freely pardoning our offences. Through Christ Our Lord. By whom, O Lord, Thou dost always create, sanctify, quicken, bless, and give us all these good things.”

Before breaking the sacred Host :

“Deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord, from all evils, past, present, and to come: and by the intercession of the blessed and glorious Mary ever Virgin, Mother of God, together with Thy blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and Andrew, and all the saints, mercifully grant peace in our days: that by the assistance of Thy mercy we may be always free from sin, and secure from all disturbance. Through the same Jesus Christ Thy Son Our Lord.”

In the "Litany of the Saints" we ask for mercy from the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity: "God the Father of heaven; God the Son, Redeemer of the world; God the Holy Ghost—have mercy on us." But the saints, not excepting the great Mother of God, are addressed in the words: "Pray for us."

Thus the liturgy of the Church teaches us more clearly than anything else the difference between the adoration due to God and the veneration accorded to the saints.

Canonization.

The first servants of God who were honored as saints in the early Church and whose intercession was invoked were naturally the martyrs, who gave their lives for Our Lord by their true and steadfast confession. The Christians tried to get possession of their bodies whenever it was possible; at their tombs the faithful assembled. No canonization was required; the whole Christian community were the witnesses of their holy death. But soon it became the custom to write down an account of their last hours and glorious martyrdom.

This was principally done at Rome, where Pope Clement divided the town into seven districts, and appointed notaries on purpose to take down the acts of the martyrs. Pope Fabian placed seven deacons

at the head of these districts, and gave them seven subdeacons for assistants, who were to superintend the notaries. St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, took similar measures, and provided that not all should be honored as martyrs who had suffered death in the persecutions, but only those who were worthy of such an honor. The accounts thus drawn up were carefully examined by the bishops, and those which were found correct were read out in public on the anniversary of the martyrs, and sent to the different churches, so that they also might commemorate these heroes of the faith. The decision of the Roman Popes was of great weight in this matter. St. John Chrysostom, patriarch of Constantinople, who enjoyed a very great veneration, was not honored by the Church as a saint till the Pope had extolled him as such. After the martyrdom of St. Virgil, bishop of Tours, the faithful applied to Rome for permission to venerate him as a saint. The first solemn canonization is that of St. Ulric, bishop of Augsburg, which was promulgated by the First Lateran Council, A.D. 993.

Soon, however, it was found necessary, for the prevention of abuses, to establish the rule that without the approbation of the Roman Church nobody could publicly be venerated as a saint, and a process was instituted on purpose, in order to avoid all error and precipitation in so important a matter, and to remove even the slightest doubt as to the

virtues and miracles of the deceased servant of God. The procedure observed in our day is as follows:

When the beatification of a deceased person is petitioned for, the bishop of the diocese sets an inquiry on foot in order to ascertain whether the person in question has really had the reputation of possessing heroic virtues and the power of working miracles. The acts are sent to Rome and made over to a congregation instituted on purpose for cases of canonization. Not till ten years after, and on the assurance of the bishop that the veneration of the confessor has not decreased, but is on the increase, a second inquiry takes place. If those who in the first instance petitioned for the beatification still insist on the progress of the matter, three bishops are deputed to examine in concert whether the person to be beatified enjoyed the reputation of leading a holy life and possessing the power of working miracles among the majority of the people, especially in the place where he died and where his body lies buried. In case this inquiry turns out in his favor, and the former petition is renewed, the examination of his virtues and miracles begins. But this may not be till fifty years after the death of the person in question, unless by special dispensation from the Holy Father. In this process each virtue and each miracle is separately examined, and physicians are called in to pronounce on the

miraculous cures which have been wrought. All this is done in three different congregations (committees), and in each of these three times. Not till these congregations have given a favorable verdict does the beatification take place in a solemn service, in which the Pope proclaims that the person named may be called "Blessed," and invoked as such, and may be made the object of public veneration because of his heroic virtues and the miracles worked by him. But this veneration is subject to many restrictions: the relics of the person pronounced Blessed may not, for instance, be carried in procession, nor his image be placed on the altar.

Some time after the beatification a petition for canonization may be sent in. But it must be accompanied by proofs that since the beatification at least two miracles have been granted by God to the intercession of the "Blessed." This trial is likewise conducted by three congregations of Cardinals. An advocate is appointed whose duty it is to bring forward everything which he thinks could possibly throw a doubt on the genuineness of the miracles. This advocate who, as it were, tries to deprive the beatified of his glory and to give satisfaction to the devil, goes by the name of "devil's advocate;" the advocate, on the contrary, who endeavors to prove the miracles is called the advocate of God. If the inquiry turns out favorably to those who have asked for the canonization, the Blessed is declared a

saint by the Pope in a solemn service. By this act the whole Church recognizes him as a canonized saint. He may be invoked in the public prayers of the Church, his name may be introduced in the holy Mass, and an office may be composed in his honor. Days may be appointed to commemorate him, and his anniversary may be celebrated. The head of the saint may be surrounded with a glory (nimbus) on pictures representing him. His image and relics may be publicly exposed to veneration, and carried in procession.

Nobody will pretend that any other tribunal in the world proceeds with such scrupulous care. If a deceased person is declared worthy of veneration after such a trial, we cannot doubt but that he really is venerable and holy. It must be specially noted that the canonization on the part of the Pope only confirms what the Christian community has held for some time.

The Second Commandment.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

Pronouncing the Name of God.

If we owe honor and adoration to God, we are also bound to show respect and reverence to His name. For the name of God is no idle word or

empty sound, but it means the essence and attributes of God. When I say: The Lord, the Lord of hosts, the King of heaven and earth, the All-Merciful, etc., it stands to reason that I mean the person of God Himself. Now we are allowed to pronounce the name of God, but we may not pronounce it in vain, *i.e.*, without necessity, irreverently, or flippantly, for it is written: "Holy and terrible is His name" (Ps. cx. 9).

Let this be specially remembered by people who in their ordinary conversations use such exclamation as "O Lord!" etc. They excuse themselves by saying that it is only a habit, and that they mean no harm. Even so, God does not accept their excuse; it is said expressly: "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that shall take the name of the Lord his God in vain" (Ex. xx. 7).

What is said of the name of God also holds good of the most holy name of Jesus. It is a blameworthy custom, although common even among pious people, to exclaim, "Lord Jesus!" because this name ought not to be used except to inspire us with respect and devotion. "In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth" (Phil. ii. 10).

The second commandment prohibits more especially blasphemy, unlawful oaths, cursing, and breaking of vows.

BLASPHEMY.

Every word by which God is offended is a blasphemy. This sin is committed by denying the perfections of God or ascribing an imperfection to God: for instance, if any one were to say: "God would have much to do if He were to trouble about each one of us;" or if we were to say: "How cruel God is, who leaves many thousands to perish in want and loads others with riches;" or: "Is it right that I am to lie here on a sick-bed?" etc. Such words are at the same time sins against faith, and grievous sins when committed deliberately.

The most grievous kind of blasphemy consists in insulting or mocking God directly, in turning Him into ridicule, in daring Him to show His power if He wants us to believe in Him, and such like speeches, which are most abominable if they are uttered with full deliberation.

We can be guilty of blasphemy also in thought: for instance, by thinking in our heart: "If only God were not omniscient and just, so that He would not punish sin!"

It would be a blasphemy by deed if any one were to show his contempt of God by spitting towards heaven or shaking his fist to show his anger against God.

It is likewise blaspheming God to mock or revile His saints, or to speak disrespectfully of the holy

cross, or the five wounds of Our Lord. He also is guilty of blasphemy who refuses to acknowledge the Blessed Virgin Mary as Mother of God (*deipara*), as the heresiarch Nestorius has done. All insults to the saints reflect upon God, who has chosen and predestined them.

Punishment of Blasphemy.

It happened once that the son of an Israelite woman had a quarrel with another Israelite, and he blasphemed the name of the Lord and cursed it. He was brought before Moses, and then put in prison till it should be known what the Lord would command. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "Bring forth the blasphemer without the camp, and let them that heard him put their hands upon his head, and let all the people stone him. And thou shalt speak to the children of Israel: The man that curseth his God shall bear his sin: and he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die; all the multitude shall stone him, whether he be a native or a stranger. He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die" (Lev. xxiv. 14-16). And the children of Israel brought forth the blasphemer and did as the Lord had commanded.

How prevalent the sin of blasphemy had become among the Israelites can be seen from the words of the elder Tobias, who prophesied that all those

should be cursed who despised Jerusalem. He thus addresses the city of God: "They shall be cursed that shall despise Thee, and they shall be condemned that shall blaspheme Thee" (Tob. xiii. 16).

The Jews therefore rent their garments to express their grief and sorrow when they heard a blasphemy (St. Mark xiv. 63).

Oaths.

By an oath is meant calling God to witness that we speak the truth, or that we intend to keep a promise we make. In certain cases this is permissible, whether we be called upon by the civil authorities to take the oath or whether it be considered necessary outside the sphere of the law. "Men swear by one greater than themselves; and an oath for confirmation is the end of all their controversy" (Heb. vi. 16).

1. An oath may only be taken in a matter of importance. All those asseverations are therefore sinful which people make use of in ordinary life in order to obtain credence for what they assert—for instance: "Upon my soul," "May I die if this is not true," etc.

Here we must observe the precept of Our Lord: "I say to you not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God: nor by the earth, for it is His footstool: nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King: neither shalt thou swear by

thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be yea, yea: no, no: and that which is over and above these is of evil" (St. Matt. v. 34-37).

2. Although it is permitted to take an oath in certain cases, the rule given by the Prophet Jeremias holds good for all: "Thou shalt swear in truth, and in judgment, and in justice" (Jer. iv. 2). We may therefore not take an oath unless we know for quite certain that the matter we swear to is true, or unless we are firmly resolved to keep what we promise.

We must use judgment in our oaths, *i.e.*, they must only be taken before a court of law, or, at any rate, with the intention of calling God to witness in a grave and important matter, not rashly, lightly, and without religious reverence. Even in a law-court the administration of an oath ought to be considered as a religious act, and treated accordingly.

An oath ought to be just, *i.e.*, taken in a righteous cause. We may only promise to do something that is allowed. If we bind ourselves by oath to do anything forbidden, for instance, to take part in a bad action, such an oath is sinful and invalid.

3. Perjury is one of the most dreadful sins, because the person who swears falsely says, as it were: "God is not almighty, He is not omniscient,

He is not just. He does not know anything of what I assert at this moment; there is no God." Such language is horrible blasphemy.

He who swears falsely, even in a trifling matter, commits a grievous sin, for the point in question is not the greatness of the matter which we confirm by oath, but the injury we do to God by denying His existence and His attributes, and by provoking and mocking His person.

Therefore God threatens the perjurer with the most awful punishments. "A curse shall come to the house of the thief, and to the house of him that sweareth falsely by My name: and it shall remain in the midst of his house, and shall consume it, with the timber thereof, and the stones thereof" (Zach. v. 4).

"Rather be beggared than perjured."

4. Christian authorities sin if they administer an oath without sufficient solemnity to remind people of the sacredness of the oath. They sin if they exact an oath in matters of little import, merely to shorten a trial; if they insert in the oaths of office clauses which scandalize the Christian conscience.

5. He who has sworn to do anything, commits a sin by not keeping his promise if he is able to keep it. In this way officials sin who do not conscientiously fulfil the duties to which they have bound themselves by oath in entering upon their office; soldiers who desert or forsake the banner which

they have sworn to defend, or turn against their sovereign; furthermore, citizens who refuse obedience to the lawful authority or to their king, and instigate, approve, or further riot and rebellion.

In a promissory oath the gravity of the sin depends on the greatness and importance of the matter promised.

6. If a man has injured another by swearing a false oath he owes him full reparation. But if in consequence of his false oath another were to suffer punishment—if he were imprisoned for instance—it would be absolutely necessary for him to accuse himself before the law, in order to effect the liberation of the man who is innocently punished. It would be the same if a man had lost his fortune or had been sent into exile through the false oath of another; contrition and penance alone would not suffice in these cases.

7. If there are good and weighty reasons for doing so, the Church can annul an oath or commute the contracted obligation into another; for instance, where the fulfilment of a promise would entail grave danger to our body, fortune, or good name, or where by a dispensation the honor of God could be promoted in a higher degree.

Persons who are not independent cannot legally promise anything on oath, and their oath only becomes valid through the consent of their superiors. Thus children cannot bind themselves by oath

without the permission of their parents as long as they are under parental authority, and religious can only do so with the sanction of their superiors.

Examples.

It is clear from Holy Writ that oaths are permitted; God said to Abraham through an angel: "By My own self have I sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only-begotten son for My sake: I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed—and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed" (Gen. xxii. 16–18). God declared to the people of Israel through Isaias: "I have sworn by Myself, the word of justice shall go out of My mouth and not return: for every knee shall be bowed to Me, and every tongue shall swear" (Is. xlv. 23, 24). Christ Our Lord Himself swore before the high-priest that He was the Son of God (St. Matt. xxvi. 63, 64). St. Paul thus solemnly asserts: "God is my witness that without ceasing I make a commemoration of you" (Rom. i. 9). We find the judicial oath instituted by Moses for the benefit of those who were accused of having appropriated anything unjustly: "There shall be an oath between them, that he did not put forth his hand to his neighbor's goods: and the owner shall accept of the oath, and he shall not be compelled to make restitution" (Ex. xxii. 11).

Cursing.

To curse means to imprecate, *i.e.*, to invoke evil on one's self or others. Cursing is in itself a sin, but it also originates in sin, for nobody wishes harm to himself or others unless it be from anger, envy, revenge, etc. If the person who curses calls upon the name of God, the Blessed Sacrament, or the holy cross, etc., he blasphemes. From this we see what a grievous sin cursing is.

1. The man who curses and calls down evil on himself in his anger and malice, transgresses grievously against self-love. In saying, for instance: "I wish I were dead!" "Oh, that I had never been born!" or in uttering other abominable speeches of the same kind he disputes and wrangles with God, and gives up his own soul to perdition. The Apostle places a man who curses among the most abandoned sinners: "Do not err. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor railers [men who curse], nor extortioners shall possess the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10).

2. He who wishes harm to others violates charity in the most grievous manner. How can a man think that he fulfils the commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," if he say to a fellow-man: "May lightning strike you!" "May the

devil take you!" etc. How awful will these words of Our Lord be for him: "Whosoever shall say [to his brother], Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire" (St. Matt. v. 22).

3. He who utters a curse dishonors God in the most flagrant manner, for he asks God or the devil to act as hangman or executioner to himself or his fellow-man. "By the tongue we bless God and the Father: and by it we curse men, who are made after the likeness of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be" (St. James iii. 9, 10).

4. Curses and imprecations drive away the blessing of God. By them man becomes his own enemy, for nobody can do a greater injury to another than the man who curses does to himself by forfeiting the blessing of God and incurring His wrath. In such a man the following words of the Psalmist will come true: "He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him: and he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him" (Ps. cviii. 18).

Application.

1. The Apostle admonishes us: "Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak" (St. James i. 19). Let us remember his words, and be guarded in our speech. Man's greatest enemy is his own tongue. Let us pray, therefore, with the Psalmist:

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: and a door round about my lips" (Ps. cxl. 3).

2. If a Christian has had the misfortune to utter a curse, he should at once ask God's pardon for the offence and make a purpose of amendment. Should he have contracted a habit of cursing, he would do well to punish himself by a little penance each time he falls. This will incite him to greater watchfulness, and help to preserve him from a relapse.

Warning Examples.

The Church historian Eusebius, who lived at the time of Constantine the Great, tells us of an awful example of self-imprecation added to false testimony.

St. Narcissus, bishop of Jerusalem, was shamefully accused of a horrible crime against chastity by a profligate Christian whom he had rebuked for his scandalous life. Three of this man's accomplices even confirmed their calumnies by oaths, in which they uttered the most fearful imprecations against themselves. "May the flames devour me," said the first, "if I do not speak the truth." The second asked to be visited with the most horrible disease; and the third wished to lose his eyesight if they did not speak the truth. Who would not have thought the bishop guilty under such circumstances? And yet he was innocent, and among his own flock there were many whose faith in his virtue never

wavered. The holy man left his defence to heaven and retired into solitude, where, far from a wicked world which disgusted him, he led the life of a hermit. But the providence of God avenged the innocent man on his persecutors. They were visited with the very same punishments which they had offered to undergo. One night the house of the first calumniator was struck by lightning; his whole property was consumed by the flames; he could not even save his life, but was burnt to death with his wife and children. The second was covered from head to foot with a loathsome leprosy. His body was a mass of ulcers, and he saw his own limbs rot away one by one. The third was so struck with fear by the punishment of the other two that he repented of his crime, and shed such abundant tears that he lost his eyesight with weeping. Then Narcissus returned to Jerusalem.

Vows.

A vow is a promise by which we bind ourselves after mature reflection to do something pleasing to God.

1. We must distinguish between a vow and a mere resolution. For instance, if a man says: "If I get well again, I will abstain from flesh-meat on Saturdays," he does not take a vow, but only a resolution. But if any one were to say: "O my

God, make me well, and I promise Thee never to touch flesh-meat again on Saturdays," and if he had the intention of binding himself under pain of sin, he would have taken a vow.

2. A vow must be voluntary, and may not be forced from any one by violence and threats, or by intimidation. So, for instance, a father may not force his child to enter the religious state in order that his other children may have a larger share of his fortune. On the other hand, a vow remains valid, although it may have been made under pressure of fear or terror: for instance, if a person in danger of death had vowed to make a pious foundation in case he escaped, etc.; for in this case the will of the person remained free.

3. If we wish to take a vow we must understand the whole import of our promise and be able to fulfil it. We may not bind ourselves by vow to anything which would injure the rights of a third person, or collide with our duty.

Thus children may take a vow to give certain alms out of their pocket-money, but only after having obtained their parents' permission. Servants may bind themselves by vow to visit a church on every Sunday when it comes to their turn to go out, but they could not bind themselves to do this every Sunday and holyday afternoon, because they are not masters of their time. Married women may not take vows by which the rights of their hus-

bands are infringed, unless they obtain their consent.

4. The object of our vow must be something pleasing to God. It must tend to the honor of God, the salvation of our soul, or the good of our neighbor. We must ask ourselves this question: Will the honor of God be better promoted by what I am about to promise than by any other good work?

In order to obviate all doubt and difficulties, it is advisable not to make a vow without having consulted one's confessor.

5. One can only make a vow to God, but one may make a vow in honor of some saint. For instance, I can vow in honor of St. Sebastian to build a chapel. But I make the promise to God in order to promote the honor of the saint whom God wishes to be honored.

6. We may also bind ourselves by vow to something to which we are already bound by divine and ecclesiastical law. We may do this to tie our own will more closely, and to give a stronger support to our human weakness. So, for instance, a man who is negligent about going to church on Sundays may see his danger, and say: "I vow from this day forth never to miss Mass on Sundays." Of course a voluntary transgression would be a double sin in his case. But the fear of committing an additional sin would be very efficacious in keeping him to his

duty. As the omission would be a more grievous sin, the fulfilment of the duty would be so much more pleasing to God.

7. The voluntary breaking of a vow is generally a very grievous sin, for by it the reverence due to God is violated, and our faith to Him is broken. "When thou hast made a vow to the Lord thy God thou shalt not delay to pay it: because the Lord thy God will require it. And if thou delay, it shall be imputed to thee for sin" (Deut. xxiii. 21).

8. A vow ceases to be binding if a person has vowed to do anything on certain conditions, and these conditions are not fulfilled. For instance, if anybody promises to make a pilgrimage in case he recovers from an illness, and he does not recover, neither he nor his heirs are bound to make the pilgrimage, or depute anybody else to make it. If a man were to promise to give a certain sum in alms every month, and sustained some reverse of fortune, so that he would be in need of the money himself, the obligation would cease. If any one had vowed a certain fast, and were to fall sick, so that he could not bear the fast, he would no longer be bound by his vow. But if any one were to vow during an illness to make a foundation, or anything of that kind, and were to die before he could fulfil his promise, his heirs would be obliged to do so in

his stead, for in this case the point is not that *he* fulfil the obligation, but that it *be fulfilled*. Such vows are called *substantial vows*.

9. Under certain circumstances a vow may be commuted into another, or a total dispensation may be obtained.

Any one may change a vow into a better one. For instance, a man may prefer to receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist on Sundays, instead of saying a Rosary every day.

To change a vow into an equivalent or inferior one can only be done by the ecclesiastical authorities. In the same way the Church alone can dispense from a vow, *i.e.*, remit it altogether. Every bishop has the power of doing this for his own diocese. But the following dispensations are reserved for the Pope: (*a*) from a vow to enter a religious order recognized by the Church; (*b*) from the vow of perpetual chastity; (*c*) from a vow to make a pilgrimage to Rome, to Jerusalem, and to Santiago di Compostella in Spain.

At the time of a jubilee all confessors have the power of commuting ordinary vows.

A dispensation may only be given for good and valid reasons. He who deceives the Church, and alleges a reason which does not exist, gets a dispensation under false pretences; such a dispensation is invalid.

Application.

Let the faithful guard above all against making rash vows, especially in time of excitement or first fervor. If any one be in doubt whether he has made a vow or not, he may in most cases assume that his promise had not the character of a vow, for one of the conditions of a vow is that it be made in a state of clear and full consciousness. In any case he would do well to consult a pious, prudent, person—his confessor if possible.

Examples.

It must not surprise us that Protestants contest the value of vows, for they deny the merit of good works altogether. But Holy Scripture teaches the contrary. It tells us how those who have made vows to God and kept them have been blessed. We hear, for instance, that the Patriarch Jacob vowed during his flight: "If God shall be with me, and shall keep me in the way by which I walk, and shall give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, and I shall return prosperously to my father's house, the Lord shall be my God: and of all things that Thou shalt give to me, I will offer tithes to Thee" (Gen. xxviii. 20-22). And God protected him and led him back, and blessed him and his posterity. Holy Anna, who was childless, made the following vow to God: "O Lord of hosts, if Thou

wilt look down on the affliction of Thy servant, and wilt be mindful of me, and not forget Thy handmaid, and will give to Thy servant a man-child: I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life" (1 Kings i. 11). And God gave her Samuel, the famous judge and prophet of Israel. David testifies: "A hymn, O God, becometh Thee in Sion: and a vow shall be paid to Thee in Jerusalem" (Ps. lxiv. 2). He wishes all Israel to know that he keeps his vows: "I will pay my vows to the Lord before all His people" (Ps. cxv. 5). St. Paul took a vow himself, and sanctified himself with others who had done the same, and thereby he showed that vows are agreeable to God.

The Third Commandment.

Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day.

The Sanctification of Sunday.

We keep Sunday as the day specially set aside for the worship and service of God. In the Old Testament the seventh day, or the Sabbath, was observed. The apostles, taught by the Holy Ghost, substituted Sunday, *i.e.*, the first day of the week, for the Sabbath day. On Sunday God created the earthly light, and on Sunday the Sun of the heavenly light rose for us in Jesus Christ. On Sunday Our Lord rose from the dead, and on Whitsunday

He sent the Holy Ghost to the faithful in order to illuminate them with supernatural light. Thus on Sunday the work of the new creation was completed, and the work of sanctification begun. Therefore Sunday is not only intended to be a day of rest for the body, but principally a day on which man is to work out his sanctification, and thus honor God.

1. The institution of a special day dedicated to the honor and service of God and destined to give man a rest from his labors is an invention of the Divine Wisdom. Man is to know above all that he is not placed in this world for work only, but that he has a higher destination, which he may not set aside. And he is also to learn that all does not depend on his labor, but that he stands in need of God's blessing if the work of his hands is to prosper. Moreover, he is to make time for meditating on his salvation, for being instructed on his duties, and for the celebration of the divine mysteries, in order to receive grace and cleanse his soul from dust and dirt.

Sunday is also a day of thanksgiving. Not that we should put off thanking God for His benefits till Sunday. No, just as we supplicate Him every day we must thank Him daily. But on Sunday we thank God specially and in communion with the whole of Christendom, and we beg that Our Lord will give His blessing to our resolutions for the coming week, and to our toil and labor.

2. The Sunday is of immense value even as a day of rest for the body. If the commandment did not enjoin, "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but on the seventh day thou shalt do no work" (Exod. xx. 9, 10), man in his selfishness would not allow any rest either to himself or his servants or his cattle; he would be so taken up by his worldly affairs that his body would succumb to his labors. It was seen at the time of the French Revolution how wise it is that man is made to rest after the space of six days. When the old calendar, and with it the old order of time, was abolished, and every tenth day appointed for a day of rest, the artisans and laborers could not hold out so long, and the wisdom of the divine institution appeared.

3. In order to give honor to God, to raise the thoughts of Christians from temporal to eternal things, and to give both to rich and poor the needful rest for the body, it is forbidden to do any servile work on Sunday, *i.e.*, all manual and field labor such as is generally done by servants, laborers, artisans, etc., for gaining their livelihood. But through custom and tradition, recognized by ecclesiastical authority, certain domestic or household works which cannot well be omitted have come to be allowed, and also some trades which cannot be interrupted without great loss on Sundays.

4. All those occupations are forbidden which

disturb the rest and religious observance of Sunday, or prevent others from sanctifying it.

Christian authorities sin when they allow or do not prevent disturbance of the Sunday rest. Masters and manufacturers are not only forbidden to make their employees work on Sundays, but they may not even give them the choice whether they will work or not, as the sanctification of the Sunday is ordained by God, and it is their duty to uphold God's institutions.

Intellectual work, however, is allowed, especially reading, writing, reckoning, drawing, playing musical instruments, studying, etc. Travelling, riding, driving, etc., are also allowed; it is allowed to go for a pleasure trip on Sunday, or to play games, provided our religious duties are not neglected, the Sunday rest is not disturbed, no scandal is given, and no sin is allowed to slip in.

5. But as the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath (St. Mark ii. 27), the precept of keeping the Sabbath holy admits of some exceptions with regard to menial work. Among these are all cases of urgent need, as, for instance, fire, floods, accidents of all kinds which require speedy help. Also works for the removal of public nuisances: for instance, the opening of streets in winter in order to prevent danger, etc. "What man shall there be among you that hath one sheep: and if the same fall into a pit on the Sabbath

day, will he not take hold of it and lift it up?" (Matt. xii. 11).

The Church does not wish that God's blessings should be lost, or that the bread for which man has toiled in the sweat of his brow should perish. Therefore she gives permission to carry home the fruits of the field if they are in danger of being spoiled by bad weather. But in cases where this is feasible, it is a duty to obtain permission from the ecclesiastical authorities (*i.e.*, the parish priest); permission of secular authority alone is not sufficient. The Council of Toledo, held in 1474, decreed: "We command the faithful to abstain on Sundays and holydays from all servile work, and it shall not be allowed to any one to till his fields or to do any other manual or field labor, except in cases of urgent necessity, and then it shall not be done without the permission of the priest."

It is a matter of course that even in these cases the work must be restricted to what is absolutely necessary, and that, as far as possible, the second commandment of the Church must be complied with.

6. The Lord did not only appoint the Sunday to be a day of rest, He also blessed it and hallowed it. Therefore Sunday is a day of sanctification, and the Church commands us to sanctify ourselves by all the means she gives us for that purpose. First among these ranks the holy Mass, at which

every Catholic Christian is bound to assist under pain of grievous sin. But of this we shall treat more fully in speaking of the second commandment of the Church.

The *sermon* also forms part of the public service. In it we hear the word of God which is "above thousands of gold and silver" (Ps. cxviii. 72). The word of God is a light to our paths (Ps. cxviii. 105). It is "living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword: and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also, and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv. 12). The word of God not only instructs us, but we see the state of our soul reflected in it as in a mirror, so that we are able to sit in judgment on ourselves, and examine before God whether we are pleasing to Him, and walk according to the doctrine of Christ. This knowledge will teach us to have recourse to the holy sacraments, those greatest means of grace, in order to cleanse ourselves from our imperfections and strengthen ourselves for the journey of the coming week. In the office of Vespers we join with the Church principally in singing the praises and glories of God. The Sunday gives us the necessary leisure for redoubling our prayers, for contemplating the mysteries of our holy faith—for instance, in the Rosary—for gathering food for our souls from good books; it also

"He was subject to them."—St. Luke ii. 51.



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"Absalom's head stuck in the oak. They ran up, and striking him, slew him."—2 Kings xviii. 9, 15.

FOURTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

"Honor thy father and thy mother."

REFLECTION.—That children should obey their parents, and inferiors their superiors, is the will of God, who delegates His authority to parents over their children, to superiors over their inferiors, for, says St. Paul, "let every soul be subject to higher powers; for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation." (Rom. xlii. 1, 2.)

PRACTICE.—Let us act in the spirit of faith, viewing the authority of God in that of our parents and superiors, and imitating the obedience of our Model, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who, when on earth, was subject to Mary and Joseph, and cheerfully submitted to all the requirements of the Mosaic and civil law.

PRAYER.—O my God, give me the grace always to obey my lawful superiors in the spirit of faith, as holding and representing Thy authority. O Mary, help me to obey all my superiors cheerfully for God's sake. Amen.

gives us an opportunity for doing various works of charity—for instance, visiting the sick. These are the blessings which the sanctification of Sunday brings with it.

7. In the same manner as the Sunday rest may not be broken by servile work of the body, so the sanctification of the Sunday may not be destroyed by those works which may be called the servile works of the soul, because they are done by the servants of darkness and of the Evil One. To these belong all sinful actions. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (St. John viii. 34).

He who commits sin on a Sunday may under certain circumstances transgress in a twofold manner, because he desecrates the Sunday. The sanctification of Sunday is more particularly destroyed by all boisterous games and amusements, dances, intemperance in eating and drinking, which lead to impurity and deliver the soul to perdition. How great an injury is inflicted on Almighty God and our dear Saviour if we desecrate His own day by sin instead of hallowing it. There are Christians who assist at Mass in the morning on Sundays and holydays, and in the afternoon they are no longer Christians but heathens. They are like the pagan soldiers, who in the court of Pilate bowed their knees in mockery before Our Saviour, and saluted Him with the words, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

and then spat upon Him and struck His head with a reed (St. Matt. xxvii. 29, 30).

Punishments, Threats, and Promises.

Desecration of the Sabbath in the Old Covenant was put on a level with blasphemy, the most grievous sin of all. In the Book of Numbers (xv. 32-36) we read:

“And it came to pass, when the children of Israel were in the wilderness and had found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day, that they brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole multitude. And they put him into a prison, not knowing what they should do with him. And the Lord said to Moses: Let this man die, let all the multitude stone him without the camp. And when they had brought him out they stoned him, and he died as the Lord had commanded.”

Several times Moses, commissioned by God, urged upon the Israelites the sanctification of the Sunday in the most emphatic manner. God said through him: “Keep you My Sabbath: for it is holy unto you: he that shall profane it shall be put to death: he that shall do any work in it, his soul shall perish out of the midst of his people” (Ex. xxxi. 14).

The Lord promised to shed the most abundant blessings on those who sanctify the Sabbath: “Keep My Sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary: I am

the Lord. If you walk in My precepts, and keep My commandments, and do them, I will give you rain in due seasons, and the ground shall bring forth its increase, and the trees shall be filled with fruit. The threshing of your harvest shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and you shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land without fear" (Lev. xxvi. 2-5). "But if you will not yet for all this obey Me, I will chastise you seven times more for your sins, and I will break the pride of your stubbornness, and I will make to you the heaven above as iron, and the earth as brass: your labor shall be spent in vain, the ground shall not bring forth her increase, nor the trees yield their fruit" (Ibid. 18-20).

The thought of the temporal reward or punishment alone should be a sufficient motive for us not to deprive God of the honor due to Him on His own day, but we should be still more stimulated by the heavenly reward which grows out of the sanctification of the Sunday, for the following promises which God made to the Israelites are addressed, with a deeper meaning, to the Christians as well:

"I will set up My tabernacle in the midst of you, and My soul shall not cast you off. I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be My people" (Lev. xxvi. 11, 12).

Application.

We must keep in mind above all that the hours which remain to us on Sundays after the fulfilment of our religious duties are most precious. Our free time, therefore, must not be spent in such a way that the impressions which we have received in Church are effaced; they should rather be strengthened. The more we are obliged to occupy ourselves with worldly affairs during the week, the more important it is to keep our soul recollected on Sundays. The Christian ought to refrain, therefore, on that day, not only from all sinful pastimes, but also from all noisy and distracting amusements which disturb the recollection of the mind.

2. It is not good to leave it to chance how we shall spend our free time on Sunday; it is to be recommended to draw up a fixed rule which we observe in its general outline on that day. Even a Christian in the world can do this if he is his own master and can dispose of his time. Such a well-regulated sanctification of the Sunday is the mainstay of Christian life.

3. Above all, the Sunday should be for us a time of quiet entering into ourselves. One or two hours spent alone in meditating on the state of our soul, and making good resolutions for the coming week, and in contemplating God, would be a way of hal-

lowing the Sunday which would bear the most precious fruit for the soul.

Examples.

In the days of King Antiochus, who tried by most cruel measures to force the Jews to break the law, many that sought after judgment and justice went down into the desert. And they abode there with their children, and their wives, and their cattle. When the king's officers heard this they went with their soldiers towards them, and made war against them on the Sabbath day. And the Jews had taken refuge in the caves, but because it was the Sabbath they had not even stopped up the openings. When the soldiers of Antiochus came they did not defend themselves, but allowed themselves to be slain rather than break the Sabbath, and they perished with their wives and children to the number of a thousand persons (1 Mach. ii. 29-38).

The inhabitants of Tarsus furnish us with an example of holy zeal to hear the word of God. They had assembled on the first day of the week to break bread, and Paul, who wished to depart on the following day, prolonged his preaching till midnight. "Then going up and breaking bread and tasting, and having talked a long time to them until daylight, so he departed" (Acts xx. 11).

See how the Christians of Troas put those tepid

Catholics to shame who think they fulfil their religious duties by hearing one single Mass on the Lord's day.

SANCTIFICATION OF THE SUNDAY AMONG THE
EARLY CHRISTIANS.

St. Justin, martyr, gives us an account in his "Apology of Christianity" of how the early Christians kept the Sunday. He says: "On the day called after the sun, all those who live in the town or in the country come together for an assembly. There the Acts of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets are read as long as is deemed convenient. When the reader has finished, the president [generally the bishop himself] holds a discourse, in which he propounds the august doctrine contained therein, and invites the people to practise it. [We see, therefore, that the early Christians used to hear sermons.] Then we all rise together and pour forth our prayers. Whereupon bread and wine and water are brought [Offertory], and the president prays and gives thanks as well as he is able, and the people join in saying, Amen! [Preface.] Of what has been blessed [Consecration] is then given to all those present and sent by the deacons to those absent [Communion]. The wealthy bring together of their possessions as much as seems good to them, and what has thus been col-

lected is deposed with the president; with it he supports orphans and widows, and others who through sickness or other causes have got into poverty or are in bonds, also strangers and guests."

From this we see that the early Christians assisted at the holy Mass and at sermons, and performed works of charity.

The Fourth Commandment.

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived in the land, which the Lord thy God will give thee.

Duties Enjoined by the Fourth Commandment.

The duties of man towards God are closely connected with his duties towards his neighbor and towards himself. By the word neighbor we mean the nearest persons who are allied with us by ties of kindred—above all, our parents and relatives; next, those who take the place of parents for us, *i.e.*, foster-parents and masters; then those who also belong to the family, although in a more remote sense—servants. We have, moreover, duties towards those who take the place of God in Church and state, or their assistants and delegates. And here we may remark that all those persons towards whom we have duties have also duties towards us. If, however, these persons do not fulfil their duties

towards us, this is no reason why we should follow their example. For we may not do wrong because we are wronged by others.

Duties of Children.

1. Children owe their parents honor in the first place. In order to impress this commandment on them, God has attached even temporal blessings or punishments to its observance or non-observance. He who honors his parents shall live long and prosper. "He that honoreth his mother is as one that layeth up a treasure. He that honoreth his father shall have joy in his own children, and in the day of his prayer he shall be heard" (Ecclus. iii. 5, 6). "Honor thy father, in work and word, and all patience. That a blessing may come upon thee from him, and his blessing may remain in the latter end" (Ecclus. iii. 9, 10).

We owe honor to our parents because they take the place of God for their children. He who despises his parents, despises Him who has chosen these persons to represent Him. This reverence must not be outward only, but we must respect our parents in our hearts, speak well of them, and excuse their faults. Outward reverence commands that we should be respectful to our parents, give them the place of honor, do not contradict them, and show our respect not only by our actions, but

also by our words. When parents grow old their children should bear their weaknesses with patience. "Son, support the old age of thy father, and grieve him not in his life: and if his understanding fail, have patience with him, and despise him not when thou art in thy strength: for the relieving of the father shall not be forgotten. For good shall be repaid to thee for the sin of thy mother" (Ecclus. iii. 14-16).

Children especially who have risen to high honors, fame, etc., must not be ashamed of their parents or their low condition. "Remember thy father and thy mother, for thou sittest in the midst of great men: lest God forget thee in their sight" (Ecclus. xxiii. 18-19).

Children remain children with regard to their parents, whatever age they may attain, or however mean the condition of their parents may be.

2. Parents show a boundless love for their children from the moment they come into this world helpless little creatures. Father and mother spare no pain or trouble, no toil or sacrifice, to provide for their children, to feed and clothe them, and to nurse them in time of sickness. Day and night do they sacrifice to their children. This love, an image of the eternal love of God Himself, ought to awaken in children a love of gratitude, which should be both inward and sincere. Children ought to take pleasure in thinking of their parents;

they ought to be grieved when they are sick or in trouble, and should pray earnestly for them. They ought to avoid everything that might afflict their parents, and endeavor to satisfy their slightest wish and spare them all annoyance. "Honor thy father, and forget not the groanings of thy mother. Remember that thou hadst not been born but through them: and make a return to them as they have done for thee" (Ecclus. vii. 29, 30).

Gratitude for the innumerable benefits which children have received from their parents requires that they should render them all the assistance they stand in need of. They ought to help them in earning their daily bread, relieve them in poverty and want, provide for them and nurse them in old age and sickness, procure Christian burial for them after their death, and never cease to pray for them. "Of what an evil fame is he that forsaketh his father: and he is cursed of God that angereth his mother" (Ecclus. iii. 18).

3. God has given the education of children into the hands of their parents, and for this reason children ought to be subject to their parents. They ought willingly and unhesitatingly to obey all just commands of their parents and receive their admonitions with deference; when they are punished they ought not resist nor grow bitter against their parents, who only do their duty in chastising them. Even when children are no longer under parental

authority they should consult their parents in all matters of importance, and follow their advice as far as possible.

Children ought especially to consult their parents in their choice of a state of life, and remember that parents not only seek the welfare of their children, but also have greater experience than they. It is true that there are cases in which children may act contrary to the will of their parents in choosing a state of life, but these cases are not frequent, and it is seldom good not to follow the advice of parents. Tobias said to his son: "Hear, my son, the words of my mouth, and lay them as a foundation in thy heart" (Tob. iv. 22).

4. As on the one hand temporal and eternal blessings are promised to children who honor their parents, so on the other unnatural children are threatened with the curse of God.

"The eye that mocketh at his father, and that despiseth the labor of his mother in bearing him, let the ravens of the brooks pick it out, and the young eagle eat it" (Prov. xxx. 17).

"He that striketh his father or mother shall be put to death. He that curseth his father or mother shall die the death" (Ex. xxi. 15-17).

"The father's blessing establisheth the houses of the children: but the mother's curse rooteth up the foundation" (Ecclus. iii. 11).

5. Although long life and prosperity have been

promised to good children, it happens not unfrequently that very excellent children, who are the joy of their parents, die in early youth, and we ask ourselves: How does this agree with God's promises? Here we can only adore the inscrutable counsels of God. But we may justly say: These children have received the better part: true life has been given to them at an early age. They have been taken away from this world, and have thus been withdrawn from sin. They have been spared much trouble and suffering, and in the abode of eternal peace they are awaiting the mourning parents whom they have left behind. For the parents their death is an admonition to lead such lives that they may again meet their beloved ones who have gone before them.

Examples.

We see good sons in Sem and Japheth, who covered their father's nakedness with averted faces. This filial act earned them their father's blessing, while Cham, the unnatural son of Noe, was cursed by him (Gen. ix. 21 *et seq.*). Isaac followed his father without resistance, and allowed himself to be placed as a victim on the altar. In reward the promise which had been given to Abraham passed over to him, and from his seed sprang the Messiah (Gen. xxii.). Joseph, the son of Jacob, was the joy of his father even in his parental home, wherefore

God did not forsake him in the time of his captivity, but raised him to high honors. And when he was thus exalted, Joseph sent for his father to Egypt, and went in his chariot to meet him, and fell upon his neck, and embracing him, wept (Gen. xlv. 29). When the elder Tobias thought his last hour had come, he called his son, Tobias, and gave him a number of paternal exhortations. When he had finished, the younger Tobias said: "I will do all things, father, which thou hast commanded me" (Tob. v. 1). His obedience was rewarded by the protection of the Archangel Raphael and by great temporal prosperity. When the mother of Solomon came to see her son "the king arose to meet her, and bowed to her, and sat down upon his throne: and a throne was set for the king's mother, and she sat on his right hand" (3 Kings ii. 19).

But the most wonderful example of a good child is the divine Child Jesus, of whom the Evangelist simply says: "He was subject to His parents" (St. Luke ii. 51). The obedience of a child contains all other virtues. On the other hand, we see a frightful punishment inflicted on Absalom for having rebelled against his father. In his flight his head was caught in an oak-tree, and the mule on which he rode passed on. And when he was thus hanging by his hair, Joab, the captain of David, thrust three lances into his heart and killed him (2 Kings xviii. 18).

Duties of Parents.

Children are a gift of God, and are confided to their parents in order that they may some day restore them to God. Parents ought to bring up their children for God and Our Saviour, and consequently take great care of them and guard them in body and soul.

1. As children come into this world helpless, the first care they require concerns their body. Parents must watch over the life and health of their children, nurse them in time of sickness, and get medical advice for them; they must preserve them from everything which might injure their health, train them to work according to their ability; they must have them learn a useful trade or enter a profession in which they can earn a respectable living. It is praiseworthy in parents if they try to save money in an honest way and without neglecting other duties in order to leave something to their children. "If any man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. v. 8).

2. The care of the souls of children requires above all things that they should be baptized in good time. As the child displays evil inclinations even in its tenderest age, it ought to be trained to good habits and cured of evil ones even before it

can be taught by words. Virtue is based on habit, and is in fact the acquired habit of good. Children ought also to be taught to pray at an early age, and to be instructed in the Catholic faith. Parents ought to watch over their children, to preserve them from all occasions of sin, to warn them lovingly and earnestly, to rebuke and chastise them if they fall into any fault. But above all they ought to give a good example to their children, so as not to become teachers of evil to them. In all cases they ought to give them good advice, especially in their choice of a state of life, in which they must not look to worldly gain, but to the good of their children's souls. They ought also to pray most earnestly for the eternal salvation of their children.

“Instruct thy son, and he shall refresh thee and shall give delight to thy soul” (Prov. xxix. 17).

“Withhold not correction from a child: for if thou strike him with a rod he shall not die” (Prov. xxiii. 13, 14).

“Hast thou children? Instruct them, and bow down their neck from their childhood” (Ecclus. vii. 25).

3. The love which parents have for their children may not be a mere natural one: they must love their children for the sake of God, who has confided them to their care, and will require their souls from them.

They must not therefore be too indulgent with

their children; they must not make them vain by over-much praise and fine clothes, nor let them be too dainty about their food and drink, nor pamper them by sleep and idleness. Especially they must try to break the self-will inborn in children by not indulging all their wishes and by never permitting them to do anything contrary to the law of God. Parents ought to love God more than their children. "He that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me" (St. Matt. x. 37). "Give thy son his way; and he shall make thee afraid: play with him, and he shall make thee sorrowful. Laugh not with him lest thou have sorrow, and at the last thy teeth be set on edge" (Ecclus. xxx. 9, 10).

4. As parents should not be too indulgent with their children from false love, neither ought they treat them with too great severity, but join mildness with strictness, and not punish in anger. Children ought always to feel that they are punished because they have failed, not because father and mother are angry. "And you fathers, provoke not your children to anger: but bring them up in the discipline and correction of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4).

5. The duties of foster-children towards foster-parents are the same as those of children to their real parents, and *vice versa*, as long as the foster-parents take the place of the parents. Among foster-parents we also number guardians. To them the fortune of their wards is intrusted, and they

ought to administer it conscientiously, and restore it intact at the proper time.

God takes orphans under His protection, and demands a strict account of those to whom they have been confided. "You shall not hurt a widow or an orphan. If you hurt them they will cry out to Me, and I will hear their cry, and My rage shall be enkindled" (Exod. xxii. 22 *et seq.*).

Examples.

Abraham provided that Isaac was not to marry a heathen woman, and sent his most trusted servant, who was ruler over all his goods, to his own country and to his kindred to get a wife for his son (Gen. xxiv.). When David lay on his death-bed he exhorted Solomon in these words: "Take thou courage and show thyself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and observe His ceremonies and His precepts, and judgments and testimonies" (3 Kings ii. 2, 3). Holy Job used to rise every morning early and offer holocausts for his children, for he said: "Lest perhaps my sons have sinned" (Job i. 5). On his death-bed Tobias addressed to the younger Tobias and his seven sons the following exhortation: "Serve the Lord in truth, and seek to do the things that please Him: and command your children that they do justice and almsdeeds, and that they be mindful

of God, and bless Him at all times in truth, and with all their power" (Tob. xiv. 10, 11). On the contrary, God punished Heli, the high-priest, for having been too indulgent with his children, who took for themselves of the flesh which the people brought for sacrifice, and thus kept the people from sacrificing. Ophni and Phinees both perished in battle on the same day, and when their father heard the news he fell backwards from the stool on which he sat and broke his neck (1 Kings iv. 18)

Duties of Sisters and Brothers and of Relatives.

Sisters and brothers are joined together by God through ties of blood to form a domestic community. They are, naturally speaking, the nearest neighbors to one another, and they ought to fulfil the commandment of charity in a pre-eminent degree. Therefore they ought to love one another and be kind to one another. As they live together under the same roof, they ought to keep peace among themselves. Sisters and brothers ought not to accuse one another falsely to their parents. If one of them has anything better than the others, he ought to share with them, and none should be jealous if another receives a present from the parents. The elder sisters and brothers ought to watch over the younger ones, that no harm may

happen to them; if they see any wrong in their sisters and brothers, they ought to instruct and warn them; they ought to help them in their work, and to assist them in every necessity. They ought also to pray for their sisters and brothers no less than for their parents. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, for there the Lord hath commanded blessing and life for evermore" (Ps. cxxxii. 1, 3).

Examples.

Abraham said to Lot: "Let there be no quarrel, I beseech thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen: for we are brethren" (Gen. xiii. 8). Joseph forgave his brothers the grievous wrong they had done unto him, and loaded them with benefits (Gen. xlv. 21). The sister of Moses did not leave her little brother, but remained by the water-side and interceded with the daughter of the Egyptian king (Ex. ii. 4-8).

On the other hand, God inflicted a dreadful punishment on the fratricide Cain. He was to be a fugitive and a vagabond on earth, and when he tilled the ground it was not to yield him its fruit because it had drunk the blood of his brother (Gen. iv. 11, 12).

Duties of Employers and Apprentices and of Teachers and Pupils.

Employers and teachers are in some cases the representatives, in others the assistants, of parents. According to circumstances the duties of apprentices and pupils are more or less the same as those of children towards their parents.

1. Apprentices must respect their employers and obey their commands in all lawful things, and punctually and exactly follow out their instructions and guard their interests.

2. Employers must watch over their apprentices. They must treat them with kindness and consideration. They must not exact too hard work from them, nor give them any work or occupation which would take them away too long from the trade they are to learn.

3. The duties of pupils and teachers are similar to those of apprentices and employers. Pupils ought to love and respect in their teachers men who impart knowledge to them, and train them to become useful members of human society and to fulfil their vocation in life. They ought to love and esteem them, to profit of the opportunity offered to them for improving themselves, to accept exhortations and even punishments with the resolution not to relapse into the faults for which they were cor-

rected. They ought also to be grateful to them as long as they live. "My son, from thy youth up receive instruction, and even to thy gray hairs thou shalt find wisdom" (Ecclus. vi. 18).

The teacher ought to see in the child he instructs a precious treasure confided to his care, not only to be initiated into worldly sciences, but to be trained for heaven. He ought, therefore, to assist parents and pastors in the work of education, make good use of the time set apart for tuition, conscientiously prepare his lessons, and give a good example to his pupils by word and deed. Thus by advancing his pupil he will increase his own merit for heaven. "A skilful man has taught many, and is sweet to his own soul" (Ecclus. xxxvii. 22).

Duties of Servants and of Employers.

Servants have duties towards their employers, towards the children of the house, and towards their fellow-servants.

1. Servants must, above all, honor and obey their employers. They must look upon them as their superiors, and carry out all their lawful injunctions. And they must not do so from necessity, but from the conviction that by faithfully fulfilling their duty they accomplish the task for which they were created. This task will be lightened by the consideration that it is easier to obey than to com-

mand, and that not they, but their employers are responsible for the orders which are given.

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thanks-worthy, if for conscience towards God, a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully" (1 Peter ii. 18. 19).

Servants must willingly and promptly execute the commands of their employers, not only as long as they are under their eye, but also when they are left to themselves. They ought to be civil and obliging, and anxious for the interest of their employers and watch over their property, and bear their caprices with patience. They must not touch the food they see about, or squander or give away anything, and not give alms out of their employers' property unless they have permission to do so. They must lead an orderly life. If they have any complaints to make, they must do so with modesty. They may have recourse to the authorities if they are wronged, but they may not take the law into their own hands.

Their duties towards the children of their employers are very sacred. They must watch over them and guard them from harm. They must instruct them to the best of their ability as far as they have been asked to do so. It would be a twofold sin if by their words or actions they were to lead children into sin or give them scandal. Towards

their fellow-servants they ought to be charitable and peaceable. They ought not to lower them in their employers' opinion or calumniate them, nor ought they to be on too familiar terms with them.

If they see a serious neglect of duty in any fellow-servant, they may report it, but only if they are certain that the neglect causes some real loss to their employer. Servants who are tempted to sin by their employers or fellow-servants must leave their service even out of time, if they cannot protect themselves against their assaults.

“Exhort servants to be obedient to their masters, in all things pleasing, not gainsaying. Not defrauding, but in all things showing good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Tit. ii. 9, 10).

Before accepting a new place, servants must make it a condition to be at liberty to fulfil their religious duties, and must not go into a house where this is not allowed.

Employers must treat their servants with charity, and give them wholesome and sufficient food, and pay the wages agreed on without deducting anything. They must nurse them in sickness, not overburden them with work, and instruct and admonish them with gentleness.

“Be not as a lion in thy house, terrifying them of the household, and oppressing them that are under thee” (Ecclus. iv. 35).

“Masters, do to your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven” (Col. iv. 1).

“The laborer is worthy of his hire” (St. Luke x. 7).

3. Employers have, moreover, obligations concerning the salvation of their servants. They must not only allow them to fulfil their religious duties, but they must see that they are fulfilled. They must watch over their servants, and when they find them going astray they must warn them with all kindness, but seriously, and not content themselves with only seeing that their work is done, for they would share in the sins of their inferiors if they passed them over in silence; they may not allow servants to give scandal to one another by cursing, or by immodest or irreligious discourses. But above all they ought to give a good example to their servants, in order to be able to give an account some day to that Master whose servants we all are. “In all things show thyself an example of good works” (Tit. ii. 7).

Examples.

We find a truly good servant in Eleazar, whom Abraham had sent into his native country to get a wife for Isaac. When he entered the house of Laban, and food was placed before him, he said: “I will not eat till I tell my message.” And when

he had obtained permission to take Rebecca home with him, he would not be detained a single day, but hastened home on the morrow (Gen. xxiv. 33, 56). While Joseph was serving in Putiphar's house, he drew down a blessing on his master, and the keeper of the prison was also blessed for the sake of Joseph (Gen. xxxix. 5, 23). When David was obliged to flee from Absalom, his servants did not leave him, but went with him and said: "Whatever our lord the king shall command, we thy servants will willingly execute" (2 Kings xv. 15). The servants of Naaman must have loved their master, for they called him "father." Eliseus had advised Naaman to wash seven times in the Jordan. But Naaman was angry, and said: "Are not the rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel?" And he was going away with indignation. Then his servants came to him and said: "Father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, surely thou shouldst have done it: how much rather what he now hath said to thee: Wash and thou shalt be clean?" (4 Kings v. 13). So anxious were they for the welfare of their master. The servants of Cornelius spoke in well-deserved praise of their master, and said of him to St. Peter: "Cornelius a centurion, a just man and one that feareth God, and having good testimony from all the nation of the Jews" (Acts x. 22). The soldiers of the centurion of Capharnaum obeyed him implicitly, for

he himself said of them: "I say to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it" (St. Matt. viii. 9).

The centurion of Capharnaum himself is the model of a master who cares for the welfare of his servants. When his servant lay at home sick of the palsy, and was grievously tormented, he did not send messengers to Our Saviour, but went himself to implore His help (St. Matt. viii. 5).

Duties Towards the Aged and Duties of the Aged Themselves.

1. It is a grace of God to attain to an advanced age, and for this reason alone the aged have a claim to our reverence and respect. "Rise up before the hoary head, and honor the person of the aged man" (Lev. xix. 32).

Old people have, moreover, experience, and can give good advice. Therefore we should listen to their words and follow them. "Stand in the multitude of ancients that are wise, and join thyself from thy heart to their wisdom, that thou mayst hear every discourse of God, and the sayings of praise may not escape thee" (Ecclus. vi. 35).

But because old age also brings weakness and helplessness with it, we ought to help and relieve the aged and treat them with kindness. "An ancient man rebuke not: but entreat him as a father: . . . old women, as mothers" (1 Tim. v. 1, 2).

2. The aged, on their part, ought to give a good example to the young; they ought to be detached from earthly things, and prepare well for death. "That the aged men be sober, chaste, prudent, sound in faith, in love, in patience: the aged women, in like manner, in holy attire, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teaching well, that they may teach the young women to be wise" (2 Tit. 2-4).

As we wish to find charity and help in our old age, it is our own interest to fulfil our duties towards the aged, and thus cultivate a good spirit among the young. "Despise not a man in his old age: for we also shall become old" (Ecclus. viii. 7).

Examples.

Simeon and Anna are two edifying examples of worthy old people. Simeon was just and devout, and waited for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was in him. Therefore he received a revelation, that he would not die before he had seen the anointed of the Lord. When he had the happiness of holding Our Lord in his arms, he had no longer any wish on earth but to die in peace. Anna, the prophetess, was a widow of four-score and four years. She departed not from the Temple, by fastings and prayers serving night and day. She was one of those who were waiting for the con-

solation of Israel, and therefore she received the same reward as Simeon. (St. Luke ii. 25-28.)

Duties Towards the Authorities, and Duties of the Authorities Themselves.

There are ecclesiastic and civil authorities. Our duties towards either are similar to those towards our parents: we owe them respect, love, and obedience.

1. Ecclesiastical authorities are: the Pope, the bishop of the diocese in which we live, our pastor, *i.e.*, the parish priest or his vicar, our confessor, and, in a wider sense, all priests.

We owe reverence to all priests because of their high office and their priestly dignity, but we ought to honor those especially who are our immediate superiors.

We must listen with humility to their instructions and exhortations, receive the means of grace of the Church with gratitude from their hands, pray for them, and help both with our alms and in any other practical way in our power in all they require for the service of the Church and for their own maintenance. "Honor God with all thy soul, and give honor to the priests" (Ecclus. vii. 33).

Catholic priests are in a special way the representatives of God, for to them even more than to the priests of the Old Covenant do the following

words apply: "Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God as Aaron was" (Heb. v. 4). Therefore we may not despise the sacerdotal dignity even in unworthy and imperfect priests.

2. It is the duty of ecclesiastical authorities to propagate true teaching in faith and morals; to watch over the purity of doctrine; to administer the sacraments according to the necessity, desire, and worthiness of the members of their flock; to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass at the proper time; to give a good example to the souls confided to their care; to instruct the erring with gentleness, and to apply the penalties of the Church to the obstinate. They ought to pray for the living and the dead, and do good to the best of their powers. "Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed: but in all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God" (2 Cor. vi. 3, 4).

3. The secular authority, *i. e.*, the head of the state, possesses power given him by God, and he causes it to be executed by his delegates in provinces, districts, and parishes. Citizens ought to honor and acknowledge this power, and to submit to it in all things lawful. "Let every soul be subject to higher powers: for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1).

4. It is the duty of citizens not only to keep

faith with the head of the state, but to defend him against hostile attacks, to avoid all opposition and rebellion themselves, to prevent it in others, to render all obligatory service, to pay the taxes of the country, and to obey the laws. "Render then to all men their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due: custom, to whom custom" (Rom. xiii. 7). "He that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation" (Rom. xiii. 2).

Citizens ought, moreover, to pray for the civil superiors and rulers, that the Lord may enlighten them to govern with wisdom and justice. The Apostle teaches: "Fear God. Honor the king" (1 St. Peter ii. 17).

"I desire, therefore, first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men: for kings and all that are in high stations" (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2).

But civil laws which are in contradiction with the law of God may not be obeyed. "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts v. 29).

5. It is the duty of secular rulers to govern with mildness, wisdom, and fatherly care. They ought to guard the life and property of their fellow-citizens, and deal out right and justice equally to rich and poor. The government ought to administer the finances of the state with economy, and not impose more duties and taxes than are necessary

for supplying the wants of the community. Above all, they ought not to touch the religious liberty of the citizens; they ought to protect Church property, to abstain from any interference with the privileges and possessions of the Church, and give a good example of a moral and upright life.

Rulers are to remember that they are the servants of God; that they rule in His name, and will have to give an account to Him some day. Therefore Solomon exhorts them thus: "Hear, therefore, ye kings, and understand: learn, ye that are judges of the ends of the earth: for power is given you by the Lord, and strength by the Most High, who will examine your works, and search out your thoughts. Because, being ministers of His kingdom, you have not judged rightly, not kept the law of justice, nor walked according to the Will of God. Horribly and speedily will He appear to you: for a most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule" (Wisd. vi. 2-7).

Examples.

When King David had to fly from Absalom, many people accompanied him, and among others Ethai the Gethite, who had only joined David on the day before. David exhorted him to go back and to look after himself and his brethren. But Ethai answered: "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth: in what place soever thou

shalt be, my lord king, either in death, or in life, there will thy servant be" (2 Kings xv. 21).

And when David had left the desert and was come to the camp, Sobi the son of Naas of Rabbath of the children of Ammon, and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodabar, and Berzellai the Galaadite of Rogelim, brought him beds, and tapestry, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and meal, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and fried pulse, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and fat calves: and they gave to David and the people that were with him, to eat: for they suspected that the people were faint with hunger and thirst in the wilderness (2 Kings xvii. 27-29).

Our Lord did not only teach, "Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" (St. Matt. xxii. 21), but he paid the tribute money for himself and St. Peter (St. Matt. xvii. 23 *et seq.*).

Jesus Sirach tells us of King Ezechias: "Ezechias did that which pleased God, and walked valiantly in the way of David his father, which Isaias, the great prophet, and faithful in the sight of God, had commanded him" (Ecclus. xlvi. 25).

And of Josias he writes: "The memory of Josias is like the composition of a sweet smell: sweet as honey in every mouth. He was directed by God unto the repentance of the nation, and he took away the abominations of wickedness. And he directed his heart towards the Lord, and in the

days of sinners he strengthened godliness" (Ecclus. xlix. 1-4).

Holy Scripture gives a similar testimony of King Josaphat: "And he set judges of the land in all the fenced cities of Juda, in every place. And charging the judges, he said: Take heed what you do: for you exercise not the judgment of man, but of the Lord: and whatsoever you judge, it shall rebound to you. Let the fear of the Lord be with you, and do all things with diligence: for there is no iniquity with the Lord our God, nor respect of persons, nor desire of gifts. In Jerusalem also Josaphat appointed Levites, and priests, and chiefs of the families of Israel, to judge the judgment and the cause of the Lord for the inhabitants thereof. And he charged them, saying: Thus shall you do in the fear of the Lord, faithfully, and with a perfect heart. Every cause that shall come to you of your brethren, that dwell in their cities, between kindred and kindred, wheresoever there is question concerning the law, the commandment, the ceremonies, the justifications: show it them, that they may not sin against the Lord, and that wrath may not come upon you and your brethren: and so doing you shall not sin. And Amarias the priest, your high-priest, shall be chief in the things which regard, God: and Zabadias the son of Ismahel, who is ruler in the house of Juda, shall be over those matters which belong to the king's office:

and you have before you the Levites for masters, take courage, and do diligently, and the Lord will be with you in good things" (2 Paral. xix. 5-11).

The Fifth Commandment.

Thou shalt not kill.

Sins Against the Physical Life of Our Neighbor.

The fifth commandment forbids us in general to injure our neighbor in the life of his body or of his soul. On the contrary, it enjoins upon us to wish and even to procure for him all that can further his physical or spiritual well-being. The above precept and prohibition concerning our fellow-men is the same with regard to ourselves, and entails various duties both towards the body and soul of our neighbor and towards our own body and soul. These duties are unfortunately infringed in manifold ways, and the transgressions against the fifth commandment accordingly take the most various shapes.

The highest earthly possession of man is life, because when life ceases all other earthly possessions cease for him. Life is a gift of God, which nobody may touch, not even the owner himself. It is the means of attaining the destination willed for us by God, who alone is the Master of life and

death. "For none of us liveth to himself: and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord: or whether we die, we die unto the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv. 7, 8).

He who touches the life of a human creature interferes with the will of God, inflicts pain on the person he injures, prevents him from fulfilling his destiny, and robs him not of the life of the body only, but possibly of the life of the soul, for the soul which he hurries out of this world may be quite unprepared to meet its Judge. He moreover inflicts a serious injury on human society in general, and on the family in particular.

1. The fifth commandment prohibits, in the first place, murder, *i.e.*, the voluntary and premeditated slaying of a human creature.

This sin belongs to the four sins crying to heaven for vengeance, and has been designated as such by God Himself. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the earth," God said to Cain, the first murderer (Gen. iv. 10). This sin must be atoned for by the blood of the murderer, who has forfeited his own life by committing it.

"Whosoever shall shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed: for man was made to the image of God" (Gen. ix. 6).

There are some aggravated kinds of murder:

parricide, matricide, fratricide, murder of a husband or of a priest, also murder committed under aggravating circumstances—for instance, murder with robbery, and assassination.

Homicide, *i.e.*, the involuntary and unpremeditated slaying of a person, is different from murder. The gravity of this sin depends on the circumstances under which it is committed. So, for instance, the killing of a person in anger is always a grave and abominable crime, but if the author of the deed has been provoked by the person he slew, this is considered an attenuating circumstance.

Not only those actions are sinful which cause death, but every voluntarily inflicted injury or ill-treatment of our neighbor.

If a man, although not committing any of these sins himself, charges another, or bribes him by money or promises, or induces or incites him to do so, he commits as great a sin as if he had done the deed by his own hand. He is bound to repair all loss accruing from it as if he himself had killed, struck, or wounded the injured person. If any one ill-treats or wounds another in such a way that he must be put under medical treatment, or is disabled for work, he is obliged to make restitution, to pay damages, and to defray all expenses incurred in consequence of his action. If a man kills another who leaves children, grandparents, parents, or brothers and sisters who depended on the de-

ceased, he is bound to make an adequate provision for them out of his own means.

2. As the violation of our neighbor's body is such a grievous sin that the author of it may forfeit his own life, nay, even his soul, it stands to reason that everything which may lead to this sin is forbidden for the Christian. Above all he must shun all those occasions where his passions are heated, and where he forgets himself so far that he is no longer master of himself. Such are quarrels, fights, drinking, and bad company. "Be not a friend to an angry man, and do not walk with a furious man: lest, perhaps, thou learn his ways and take scandal to thy soul" (Prov. xxii. 24, 25). "Wine and women make wise men fall off, and shall rebuke the prudent" (Ecclus. xix. 2).

3. There are many other sins by which we can injure our neighbor in his body. Everything, for instance, which injures our neighbor's health is a sin. Of this sin all those are guilty who sell unwholesome and adulterated victuals, food, or drink; doctors who treat patients although they are conscious of being ignorant of their disease and its remedies, and from jealousy or pride will not consult other physicians, or who do not regularly visit their patients, especially when these are poor and cannot pay them highly; furthermore, nurses who do not properly look after their patients, act contrary to the doctor's injunctions, and make patients

suffer by this neglect; children's nurses sin in this way who do not properly attend to the children confided to them and do not watch over them carefully; also those who recommend and sell to the sick remedies which they know to be of no efficacy, or even injurious. The amount of guilt in these cases depends on the injury caused, and on the bad intention with which the sin is committed.

We are not only forbidden to injure our neighbor by actions, we may not even have evil thoughts against him in our heart, and still less revile him by words.

4. There are three cases in which it is lawful to kill deliberately, viz., in executing a judicial sentence, in war, and in self-defence. But even in these cases certain principles must be followed.

A judge may only pronounce sentence of death in cases where the law inflicts capital punishment, and where the letter of the law is quite clear and explicit. The crime itself must be irrefragably proved, so that no doubt can be entertained about its commission.

In war an attack may only be made on an armed enemy drawn up for battle, or refusing to surrender during flight, but not on those who are defenceless or ask for quarter.

Self-defence should, properly speaking, be limited to the defence of our own lives. It is allowed, however, to kill robbers, burglars, and dangerous

thieves in order to protect our property, that is to say, when they are caught in the act.

“If a thief be found breaking open a house or undermining it, and be wounded so as to die: he that slew him shall not be guilty of blood” (Ex. xxii. 2).

“He that taketh away the bread gotten by sweat is like him that killeth his neighbor” (Ecclus. xxxiv. 26).

It is therefore, not lawful to kill a thief or a robber if our life is not in danger, or if we are only afraid of sustaining some slight loss in our property: for instance, if an orchard were invaded at night, or if there were any other way of securing the thief.

5. A different way again of killing or wounding another is the duel. Two persons meet after the day and hour and the arms to be used have been agreed on, and fight till one of them is either killed or wounded or disabled. Such a combat is always a sin, even when the combatants labor under that fatal delusion that an insult to their honor can only be blotted out by a duel. Such an undertaking is a criminal interference with the right of God, who says, “Revenge to Me” (Rom. xii. 19), and with the prerogative of the authorities, whose duty and business it is to punish crime. A duel would only be lawful in one case, viz., if the authorities were to command it in order to avoid war,

or if by this method a war could be decided, as was the case in the combat between David and Goliath (1 Kings xvii.).

The Church lays the most heavy penalties on duelling. all who take part in a duel, not only the duellists themselves, but also the witnesses, those who undertake to carry the challenge, those who in any way favor or further a duel for which time and hour have been settled beforehand, and even the spectators, are excluded from the communion of the Church; and to a person killed in a duel Christian burial is denied, even if he dies in penitent dispositions. The Council of Trent calls the duel an "abominable custom, introduced at the instigation of the devil that he may compass the ruin of the soul through the bloody death of the body."

6. It is also homicide to cause abortion. Those who perpetrate this crime, as well as those who help in it and abet it, fall under the ban of excommunication.

7. We may injure our neighbor in his life or in his health by causing him violent emotions, sudden fright or terror. How many foolish practical jokes have been played, in consequence of which people have fallen sick or even died with fright and fear! We can also slowly undermine the health of a person by mortifications, outbursts of anger, malicious words, by giving them bad or insufficient food, by assigning them unhealthy dwelling-places, by deny-

"David said to Abisai : Kill him not."—1 Kings xvi. 9.



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"Therefore cursed shalt thou be upon the earth."—Gen. iv. 11.

FIFTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

“Thou shalt not kill.”

REFLECTION.—To keep the fifth commandment, we should strive to carry out the directions of our divine Saviour and of the holy man Tobias. “See that thou never do to another.” said Tobias to his son, “what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another.” (Tobias iv. 16.) “All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you,” says Our Lord, “do you also to them.” (Matt. vii. 12.) And again: “As you would that men should do to you, do you also to them in like manner.” (Luke vii. 31.) As it is our duty to avoid all injury to the health and life of our body and soul, so also we should carefully refrain from treating others harshly, from all ill-feeling, and especially from injuring the soul of our neighbor by bad example.

PRACTICE.—Let us bear patiently with the shortcomings of our fellow-men, overlook their faults, and readily forgive their offences against us, so that we may claim forgiveness from God whenever we say this beautiful.

PRAYER.—Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. O my God, I forgive all men, deign to forgive me also. O Mary, obtain for me the spirit of true charity. Amen

ing them necessary care and attendance, by continued ill-usage, although the latter may not cause immediate injury in each separate instance. These kinds of very grievous sins, which are no better than murder, are committed by children who feel it as a burden to provide for their parents, and who deal out what they are obliged to give them in scanty measure, of bad quality, and with an ill-will, and make them feel that they are unwelcome to them; by step-parents who try in this way to get rid of the children of a first marriage in order to obtain the fortune they possess, or which will fall to them later on; by husbands and wives who are tired of each other and shorten each other's lives by continued ill-treatment.

Sorrow, heartbreak, grief, affliction, anger, etc., embitter and shorten our days, and those who cause them are often worse than murderers, for a murderer often repents immediately after the deed, while ill-usage is a deliberate, prolonged, malicious, slow method of killing or inflicting wounds.

"He that stealeth anything from his father or from his mother: and saith this is no sin, is the partner of a murderer" (Prov. xxviii. 24).

3. But besides all these the fifth commandment forbids all that could lead to the violation of our neighbor's life or body, especially enmity and hatred, strife, abuse, and contempt of our neighbor—everything, in short, which excites anger or ill-

feeling in man, and makes him forgetful of the law of God. It is from these evils that killing and murder spring, and an offensive word is often a little spark which grows into a flame and causes infinite mischief. How beautifully it is said in Ecclesiasticus:

“Remember thy last things, and let enmity cease” (Ecclus. xxviii. 6).

“Remember the fear of God and be not angry with thy neighbor. Remember the covenant of the Most High, and overlook the ignorance of thy neighbor. Refrain from strife, and thou shalt diminish thy sin: for a passionate man kindleth strife, and a sinful man will trouble his friends, and bring in debate in the midst of them that are at peace” (*Ibid.* 8-11).

“A hasty contention kindleth a fire: and a hasty quarrel sheddeth blood” (*Ibid.* 13).

A very common and most sinful way of causing enmity is tale-bearing. It consists in somebody repeating to another what a third person has said of him, and causes much bitterness. Very often lies are added to these malicious tales, and make the sin doubly grievous. “The whisperer and the double-tongued is accursed: for he hath troubled many that were at peace” (Ecclus. xxviii. 15).

9. What we are not allowed to do to our neighbor we are not allowed to wish for him. As God takes the will for the deed in the case of a man

who wishes to do a good work but is not able to, so hatred and revenge in a man's heart are sins equal to bloodshed. "Whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire" (St. Matt. v. 22).

Examples.

God Himself pronounced the sentence against Cain, the first murderer (Gen. iv. 11, 12). The Egyptian king who caused the male children of the Israelites to be thrown into the water was drowned himself in the sea with his whole army (Ex. i. 22). When the Jews had entered the Land of Promise, they took King Adonibezec of Bezec prisoner and cut off his fingers and toes. And he said: "Seventy kings having their fingers and toes cut off, gathered up the leavings of the meat under my table: as I have done, so hath God requited me" (Judges. i. 7). "The bloody and the deceitful the Lord will abhor" (Ps. v. 7).

Sins Against One's Own Life.

The sins against one's own life are: Suicide and self-mutilation, and suicide in a refined form, or shortening one's own life, foolhardiness, desire of death from weariness of life.

1. Intentional and premeditated suicide is one of the most heinous sins against God, against human society, and against self. God has called man

into being; He has appointed him a certain state and condition to live in, and given him a destination. The self-murderer interferes with the right and the will of God; he withdraws from the just claims which human society has upon him; he deprives himself of the opportunity of working for the good of his fellow-men, and plunges his soul into eternal perdition, because his sin cannot be repented of, nor expiated, nor in any way atoned for.

The causes which drive men to suicide are want of faith and confidence. He who believes in a just God, who punishes evil, does not kill himself, for he knows that both in life and death he is in the hands of God, the almighty and all-seeing Judge. For the Lord says: "There is no other God besides Me: I will kill and I will make to live: I will strike, and I will heal, and there is none that can deliver out of My hand" (Deut. xxxii. 39).

And although sickness and bodily pain, poverty, want, and even fear for the sins of our past life were to come upon us, we know as Christians that no cross is so heavy that we cannot bear it with the grace of God, no sin so heinous that it cannot be forgiven when the sinner repents of it, amends his life, and seeks refuge with Jesus. This knowledge makes us patient, and prevents us from throwing down our cross and laying hands on ourselves. Suicide is also a great scandal, and the Church justly denies Christian burial to the self-murderer.

The Church judges more mildly or even excuses those self-murderers who attempt their life in a state of insanity or similar derangement of the mind, into which they have fallen without their own fault, but not those who kill themselves out of fear of punishment after a dissipated and sinful life, or after the commission of a crime.

2 Self-mutilation, *i. e.*, unnecessary and wanton injury done to one's own limbs, is also a grievous sin; the magnitude of this crime depends on the malice of the intention with which it is done and on the consequences which it causes. For man is not the master, but only the guardian of his body; God made man what he is. We are allowed, however, to sacrifice a limb by amputation in order to preserve life, because a part is not as precious as the whole. For this reason doctors may perform an operation which endangers life in cases where beyond doubt life would be lost without the operation. But the consent of the patient must always be obtained. "Know you not that your members are the temples of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Cor. vi. 19).

3. There is another kind of suicide which consists in shortening our life by dissipation or excessive passions. It is committed by the intemperate, the profligate, the choleric, and also by those who injure their health by giving themselves up to im-

moderate sadness, and by worrying and tormenting themselves. "Sadness hath killed many, and there is no profit in it. Envy and anger shorten a man's days, and pensiveness will bring old age before the time" (Ecclus. xxx. 25, 26).

4. Fool-hardiness, or undertaking an action in which we risk our life, is a sin even when the enterprise succeeds, because it might have failed. It is chiefly committed from recklessness and bravado, from boasting and vainglory, by climbing, jumping, swimming, and other displays of our physical powers. This is often done for a bet. Those bets are especially sinful where people try to show how much they can eat or drink in a given time. Such fool-hardiness is a twofold sin, because it is an offence against temperance as well. "Go not after thy lusts, but turn away from thy own will. If thou give to thy soul her desires, she will make thee a joy to thy enemies" (Ecclus. xviii. 30, 31).

On the contrary, daring deeds are allowed and even commanded in the exercise of the duties of our state: for instance, for soldiers who are obliged to expose themselves to the attack of the enemy, for priests, for doctors and sick nurses in infectious diseases, and altogether in the practice of works of charity and for the prevention of a serious evil—for instance, to save human life in cases of fire or shipwreck, etc. It is a duty to sacrifice one's own life for the confession of the true faith, because in

doing so we save the life of the soul, which would be lost by the denial of our faith. "He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth unto life eternal" (St. John xii. 25).

5. We can moreover sin very grievously by desiring death from impatience, melancholy, and despair over the pains and miseries of human life. The cause of this sin is likewise want of confidence; it shows discontent with the will of God, murmuring against His divine ordinances. The Prophet Jonas was guilty of it when he wished to die on seeing that Nineve was not destroyed, and when a worm struck the ivy which shaded him so that it withered (Jonas iv. 7, 8).

On the other hand, we may wish for death from love of God, so as not to offend Him any more, or from a desire to be in heaven with Him. The Apostle Paul was filled with this desire when he exclaimed: "I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ!" (Phil. i. 23).

Examples.

All sins against one's own life proceed from infidelity, love of pleasure, disappointed ambition, or other sinful motives. Here we may say: As the tree, so the fruit. This applies principally to suicide. Saul killed himself, because he had lost a battle and was afraid of being laughed at (1

Kings xxxi. 4). Achitophel gave David an advice which the king did not heed, but rather followed the advice of Chusai, another friend, and Achitophel was so incensed at this that he hanged himself (2 Kings xvii. 23). Ptolomee, a general of Eupator, was accused of treachery by the latter, and was conscious of his guilt. Out of fear of the punishment which awaited him, he put an end to his life by poison (2 Mach. x. 13). Judas hanged himself in despair, because he thought his sin was too great to be forgiven (St. Matt. xxvii. 5). We see, therefore, that this sin is only the result of other preceding sins or of a sinful state.

Sins Against the Life of the Soul.

The fifth commandment does not only forbid to violate the life of the body, but it prohibits everything which could injure the life of the soul and deprive it of sanctifying grace. This is done by scandal, *i.e.*, every word or action by which either our own soul or the soul of our neighbor sustains any injury. The former is called taking, the latter, giving scandal.

1. Giving scandal means being the cause or occasion of sin in others by sinful words or works, or by some omission of duty.

The magnitude of the sin of scandal is determined by:

a. The gravity of the sin into which another is led. So, for instance, it is not as great a sin to induce any one to steal fruit from an open orchard as to make him take part in a burglary.

b. On the number of persons who are or may be led into sin. Thus a man who in a public assembly incites the masses to disobey the laws of the state and rebel against the government sins more grievously than another who only tries to influence others occasionally and individually in the same way.

c. By the malicious intention of the person who gives scandal. For instance, it is a grievous sin to mock at religious things and pose as an unbeliever from mere recklessness, but a far more grievous one to endeavor to rob another of his faith by pernicious words and teaching.

d. On the authority and power of the person who gives scandal. The master of a house, whose example influences his inferiors, the official, the priest, the sovereign, who give scandal to those under their charge, sin much more grievously than ordinary persons, because their example is followed by their servants, their inferiors, their parishioners, their subjects.

Scandal is principally given by:

a. Those who in presence of others hold sinful and especially immodest discourses, sing indecent songs, by which they excite evil desires and famil-

iarize their neighbor with sin, and weaken or destroy holy chastity; moreover, those who ridicule the doctrines of the Church, mock her practices and institutions, revile her priests, and lead others to infidelity.

b. Those who spread immodest or infidel writings, exhibit pictures of the same kind, or allow their children to look at them; dress immodestly, or allow their children to do so.

c. Those who arrange immodest dances, induce others to drink and gamble, give them occasion for illicit meetings, etc.

d. Those who deter others from fulfilling their religious duties or make it impossible for them to do so; masters and employers who do not allow their servants to go to church on Sunday or fulfil their Easter duties; housewives who place meat on the table on Friday, etc.

The worst scandal is that which is given to the innocent by teaching them sin, bringing them up to it, committing it with them or in their presence, whether it be by words, pictures, or actions. Persons who are guilty of such scandal are justly called the accomplices of the devil, for they help him to catch souls in his net and to lead them to ruin. They undo the work of Redemption, deprive the precious blood of Jesus Christ of its efficacy, and rob heaven of the souls for whom Our Saviour suffered. Such scandal-givers are guilty of all the

sins which are committed by those whom they have seduced, and which would not be committed without their evil influence.

Over such Our Lord exclaims: "He that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come: but nevertheless, woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh" (St. Matt. xviii. 6, 7).

The principal reason why scandal is such a grievous sin is that he who causes it is utterly incapable of repairing the harm he has done. It is not in his power to reclaim those whom he has corrupted, were he ever so willing to do so. He cannot even calculate the amount of harm he has caused, for he does not know how many others may have been seduced by those whom he first seduced. This holds good especially of the authors of infidel or immoral writings who sow perdition among a whole nation. To them the following words apply: "An enemy speaketh sweetly with his lips, but in his heart he lieth in wait, to throw thee into a pit" (Ecclus. xii. 15).

The different ways of giving scandal are contained in the nine ways of sharing another's sin, of which we shall treat later.

2. He who through culpable ignorance or criminal weakness allows himself to be led into sin takes scandal. This sin is committed by those who from idle or criminal curiosity read bad books or look at immodest representations. All those things which have been the cause or occasion of sin, as, for instance, bad books, newspapers, magazines, persons who hold evil discourses, or are engaged in sinful pursuits, etc., must be put away and avoided to the utmost of our power, as we shall explain more fully when speaking of the Sacrament of Penance.

3. A special kind of scandal is the so-called Pharisaical scandal. This sin is committed by taking scandal at things which are no sin at all, but rather meritorious actions. Thus some people are scandalized when they see others endeavor to lead perfect lives, give themselves up to pious exercises, hold edifying conversations, and receive the sacraments frequently. They call those kinds of persons in mockery saints, devotees, etc. They assert that pious conversations are out of place in society. Nay, they even pretend to be zealous for the honor of God by declaring that the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar is such an august mystery that nobody can receive it worthily, wherefore they condemn holy communion. This is a hypocritical way of taking scandal, in which the sin is not committed by the persons who do the good works, but by the others who are scandalized at seeing them done.

Thus the Jews were scandalized at Our Lord Himself when they heard His wisdom and saw His miracles (St. Matt. xiii. 54, 57). And when He went into the house of Zacheus, they murmured and said: "He eateth with sinners" (St. Luke xix. 7). In the same way they took scandal when Jesus healed a sick man on the Sabbath. But, above all, it was in their eyes a crime worthy of death when He called Himself the Son of God (St. Luke xxii. 70).

In this sense St. Paul says that Christ crucified was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and unto the Gentiles foolishness (1 Cor. i. 23).

But the Catholic Christian ought not even to do indifferent or lawful things, if his weaker brethren might be scandalized thereby. So, for instance, a Catholic who is dispensed by his confessor from keeping the Friday abstinence should not eat meat in public before others who do not know of his dispensation, and might take a bad example from seeing him do so. Therefore St. Paul says:

"Wherefore if meat scandalize my brother, I will never eat flesh, lest I should scandalize my brother" (1 Cor. viii. 13). "From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves" (1 Thess. v. 22).

Examples.

Here again we find a beautiful example in the venerable old man Eleazar. He would not even pretend to eat forbidden meat. "For it doth not

become our age, said he, to dissemble; whereby many young persons might think that Eleazar, at the age of fourscore and ten years, was gone over to the life of the heathens: and so they, through my dissimulation, and for a little time of a corruptible life, should be deceived, and hereby I should bring a stain and a curse upon my old age" (2 Mach. vi. 24, 25).

Duties Enjoined by the Fifth Commandment.

The duties which the fifth commandment enjoins are chiefly based on the virtue of charity towards our neighbor. This true inward charity must be exercised towards everybody, even towards our enemies. We are to live in peace and harmony with all men, if it be possible (Rom. xii. 18); we are to help them in their need, and be patient, kind, and gentle with them. If one of our brethren fail, we are to exhort and warn him in all brotherliness. We are never to hurt our neighbor, or to wish him any harm. We are to promote his health by all means in our power, and also to take care of our own body; when we are ill we are to use the right remedies in order to recover our health. "Health of the soul in holiness and justice is better than all gold and silver: and a sound body, than immense revenues" (Ecclus. xxx. 15).

Application.

Let us be convinced that we are miserable and weak and prone to evil, and let us beware of everything which might cause strife and dissension. Let us carefully guard our tongue, that nobody may be scandalized by our words. Let us take care not to offend our neighbor in any way, and let us rather give in a hundred times and be at peace with our neighbor than remain in the right and live in discord. But, above all, let us master anger, which leads to violence, and has plunged thousands into perdition. Our best safeguard will be the fear of God. "That which is without fear cannot be justified: for the wrath of his high spirits is his ruin" (Ecclus. i. 28).

Cruelty towards Animals.

We have also precepts how to treat animals. The fifth commandment forbids us to torment and overburden animals—nay, it commands that we should be merciful towards them. God has made man master of the whole earth, and all animals are given into his hands. He may employ them for his own use and may protect himself against the dangerous ones. But he must be kind to those he uses for his service, and in killing an animal he may not inflict greater pain than necessary. Domestic ani-

imals especially require care and tending, for they cannot provide for themselves, they cannot complain, and are helpless in the hands of man. What would man be without the animals? Is it not abominable, therefore, when he purposely causes pain to a dumb beast in cold brutality, or hurts it from wantonness or carelessness? Like man himself the animal has five senses, and, like him, it feels pain. Even in his own interest man should spare animals. But Holy Scripture also commands it: "The just regardeth the lives of his beasts: but the bowels of the wicked are cruel" (Prov. xii. 10).

The following rules ought to be observed in dealing with animals:

When a beast is killed, it ought to be done in such a manner that death is hastened as much as possible, and no unnecessary torture added. Of what abominations man is often guilty! Let us only call to mind the sights that often meet our eye: the calves, sheep, and pigs with their legs tightly tied together, the ill-treated cart-horses, the maddened animals in a bull-fight, the fish boiled alive. He who has no compassion when he sees a calf bound with ropes and thrown into a cart, and in the heat of the sun exposed to the stings of insects, lying there helpless with its tongue hanging out of its mouth, its head banged about with the jolting of the vehicle, from which it is afterwards flung on

the ground, to remain for hours in this wretched condition—he who sees these and similar acts of cruelty, and does not feel for the poor animal or wish to release it from its tortures, does not deserve the name of man; he is not a child of that heavenly Father of whom it is said: “He giveth to beasts their food: and to the young ravens that call upon Him” (Ps. cxlvi. 9). “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?” (St. Luke xii. 6).

Examples.

The history of Jonas is a beautiful illustration of the regard God has for poor, senseless creatures. When this disobedient prophet murmured because Ninive was not destroyed, the Lord said to him: “Shall I not spare Ninive, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons, that know not how to distinguish between their right hand and their left, and many beasts?” (Jonas iv. 11).

Moses gave to the Israelites strict laws intended for the protection of animals.

“Thou shalt not pass by if thou seest thy brother’s ox or his sheep go astray: but thou shalt bring them back to thy brother” (Deut. xxii. 1). “If thou see thy brother’s ass or his ox to be fallen down in the way, thou shalt not slight it, but shalt lift it up with him” (Deut. xxii. 4). The

same was to be done to the ox of an enemy. "Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together" (Deut. xxii. 10). Even temporal blessings are promised to the man who is kind to animals, for Moses commands: "If thou find as thou walkest by the way, a bird's nest in a tree, or on the ground, and the dam sitting upon the young or upon the eggs: thou shalt not take her with her young, but shalt let her go, keeping the young which thou hast caught: that it may be well with thee, and thou mayst live a long time" (Deut. xxii. 6, 7). The Israelites used to employ oxen to thresh the corn with their feet. Some of the people who were miserly muzzled the oxen, so that they should not eat of the corn. Therefore they were told: "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out thy corn on the floor" (Deut. xxv. 4). In the third commandment it was expressly enjoined that the animals should not work on the Sabbath. "Six days shalt thou work: the seventh day thou shalt cease, that thy ox and thy ass may rest" (Exod. xxiii. 12). Nay, in order to cultivate feelings of very delicate consideration among the Israelites, it was commanded: 'Thou shalt not boil a kid in the milk of its dam' (Exod. xxiii. 19).

The Sixth Commandment.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

The Ninth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.

Sins Against the Sixth and Ninth Commandments.

As the welfare of society depends on the preservation of human life, so the welfare of the family depends on the sacredness of the marriage-tie. But as the human community is but an aggregation of a number of families, the welfare of society depends no less on the sacredness of marriage. For this reason the sixth commandment forbids in the first place all violation of conjugal fidelity, and not only by deed, but also by intention, or by voluntary desire, as expressed in the ninth commandment. Just as the man who hates his fellow-man is called a murderer (St. John iii. 15), he who looks upon a woman to desire her is counted among the adulterers. "But I say to you, that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart" (St. Matt. v. 28).

Adultery is not a simple but a manifold sin, for

the adulterer not only sins against the sixth commandment, but he violates the faith he has sworn before the altar, and the rights of his consort. Besides, injustice is frequently done to legitimate children by giving to those born in adultery the same fortune as to the former. Wherever any injustice has been done in this way, the adulterer is bound to repair all temporal loss which the innocent consort and the children have sustained.

In the Old Covenant adultery, like murder, blasphemy, and perjury, was punished with the severest penalty known, that of stoning. "If any man commit adultery with the wife of another, let them be put to death, both the adulterer and the adulteress" (Lev. xx. 10).

2. The sixth commandment prohibits all unchaste actions, whether committed with another or alone. It also forbids all voluntary unchaste thoughts and desires, all unchaste looks and words, all that incites to and develops impurity, all that violates holy modesty, be it by look or touch. It is an aggravating circumstance when this sin is committed with a person of the same sex, or a married person, or with an ecclesiastic or religious.

3. There are some sins which occur frequently, which are considered very trifling by many, and are scarcely punished by the authorities, and yet cause fearful moral havoc in the hearts and minds of men; they are the following:

a. Impure jokes and farces, words with a double meaning, and unchaste songs; they do not fail to corrupt the mind, because they excite unholy desires, root out modesty, and leave impressions on the imagination which are not easily effaced, and keep the soul in a constant state of temptation.

b. Impure pictures and representations, which familiarize with evil, poison the imagination, and in the same way as impure words, jokes, and songs leave the sting of sin in the heart.

c. Immoral books, in which vice is painted in alluring colors or defended, or in which bad principles are upheld. These sins are all the more heinous because they help to carry the seeds of vice into the remotest spheres, and cause grave scandal.

“Fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not so much as be named among you, as becometh saints, nor [let there be] obscenity” (Eph. v. 3, 4).

4. The malice and enormity of the sin of impurity is easily measured by its destructive effects, by its pernicious consequences, and by the punishment with which God visits it. Man, the image of God, becomes an animal in committing it. He no longer serves God; like the animal, he is a slave to his body and its desires. He even sinks below the level of the brute beast, for the animal follows its natural instinct, but man, who is endowed with a

free will, sells his birthright, resists the voice of conscience, despises the grace which has been bestowed upon him, and deliberately rebels against the law of God. Sins against chastity not only corrupt the soul, but also the body, for disease and ruin follow in their train.

Other very common consequences of these sins are:

Shattered fortunes, sorrow, disgrace, and ruin of family happiness. Moreover, a man who is addicted to these vices sinks lower and lower, and becomes more and more weak and incapable of resisting temptation. What was first done from frailty is soon committed with full consent and deliberation. At last a man succeeds in persuading himself that lust is no sin. Thus he who fell with anguish and remorse of conscience, in the end becomes a hardened sinner.

Holy Scripture pronounces on the unchaste the following sentence: "For know ye this and understand, that no fornicator nor unclean person . . . hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. v. 5).

The sin of impurity committed by deed with a person of the same sex is called, because of its enormity and abominableness, the sin against nature, and also the Sodomite sin, because the inhabitants of Sodom were guilty of it. It is numbered among the sins crying to heaven for vengeance, be-

cause Sodom was so wicked that the cry of its sin had "grown loud before the Lord" (Gen. xix. 13).

Duties Enjoined by the Sixth Commandment.

ON CHASTITY ACCORDING TO OUR STATE.

As impurity is such a grievous sin that every time it is committed the soul is in danger, it is a most imperious duty for the Christian to avoid everything which might lead to it, and to use all those means by which we are strengthened against impurity and acquire divine grace.

In the first place, we are commanded to practise chastity according to our state.

1. The most common causes which lead to sins of impurity, and, as it were, pave the way for them, are:

a. Intemperance in eating and drinking. "Wine is a luxurious thing, and drunkenness riotous" (Prov. xx. 1).

b. Idleness, which even the voice of the people has called the root of all evil. The Prophet already says of the inhabitants of Sodom: "Behold this was the iniquity of Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance, and the idleness of her, and of her daughters: and they did not put forth their hand to the needy and to the poor" (Ezech. xvi. 49).

c. Immodest dress, which causes many sins and causes great scandal. "In like manner the women

also in decent apparel: adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety, and not with plaited hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly attire" (1 Tim. ii. 9).

d. Bold looks and listening to sinful discourses. The eyes and the ears are the channels through which sin enters into the soul. "Gaze not upon a maiden, lest her beauty be a stumbling-block to thee. Look not round about thee in the ways of the city, nor wander up and down in the streets thereof. Turn away thy face from a woman dressed up, and gaze not about on another's beauty. For many have perished by the beauty of a woman, and hereby lust is enkindled as a fire" (Ecclus. ix. 5, 7-9).

e. Indecent dances and plays. To dances applies, as St. Francis of Sales says, what we know of mushrooms: the best of them are worth nothing. St. Ephrem says: "Where noise of timbrels and dancing is heard, men are blinded and women seduced."

f. The greatest danger to holy purity are those long acquaintances, which seem innocent in the beginning, but nearly always lead to sin. Of them St. Alphonsus Liguori says: "I say in general, that a person who entertains acquaintances hardly keeps from proximate occasion of sin. Experience teaches that there are but few who keep up those intimacies and remain free from grievous sins. And although they may not sin in the beginning,

they easily fall in the course of time. At first one speaks from affection, afterwards affection changes into passion, and when passion has once taken root, it blinds the understanding and effects that one falls into a thousand sins of impure thoughts, and words, and even into unchaste actions."

2. Chastity according to our state is threefold: conjugal chastity, chastity of widows, and of virgins.

a. Married people must know that not everything is allowed in the married state, but that nothing may be done which is opposed to the end of marriage. The marriage of Tobias and Sara is a most beautiful example of a devout marriage even for Christians. We read that Tobias said to Sara: "We are the children of saints, and we must not be joined together like heathens that know not God" (Tob. viii. 5).

The Angel Raphael discovered to Tobias how it happens that the devil gets power over married persons: "They who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves, and from their minds, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power" (Tob. vi. 17).

b. To widows the Apostle gives the following precept: "But she that is a widow indeed and desolate, let her trust in God, and continue in supplications and prayers night and day. For she that liveth in pleasures is dead while she is liv-

ing. And this give in charge, that they may be blameless" (1. Tim. v. 5-7).

c. The chastity of virgins is extolled in Holy Writ and by the Fathers in the most glowing terms. In the Book of Wisdom it is written: "How beautiful is the chaste generation with glory: for the memory thereof is immortal: because it is known both with God and with men. When it is present, they imitate it: and they desire it when it hath withdrawn itself, and it triumpheth crowned forever, winning the reward of undefiled conflicts" (Wisd. iv. 1, 2).

Our Lord Himself likens those who do not marry and remain virgins to the angels (St. Luke xx. 36); and in the Apocalypse it is written of those who have not defiled themselves with women: "These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. These follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb" (Apoc. xiv. 4).

St. Francis of Sales praises chastity in these words: "Chastity is the lily among virtues; it makes man nearly like to the angels. Nothing is beautiful which is not pure, and the purity of man is chastity. It has the glory entirely its own of being the fair virtue resplendent in body and soul at the same time. A chaste heart is like the mother of pearl which does not allow any water to

come into her shell except the drops which fall from heaven: it will not give itself up to unholy pleasure, nor admit even a voluntary thought of it into its sanctuary."

Application.

1. The Catholic Christian must remember that he can preserve the treasure of holy purity only by the grace of God, and therefore he must pray for it, and pray for it with great humility, for many have fallen because they deemed themselves strong and had too much confidence in their own virtue. Let us invoke the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and bravely fight the good fight, looking to the splendid reward which she received and which awaits us also, so that we too may be crowned with all those glorious saints who have conquered before us. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God" (St. Matt. v. 8).

2. The sacraments are the means of grace of the Church. We must therefore receive them from time to time. We shall always come away strengthened from the Table of the Lord. The Christian's life ought to be an illustration of these words of the Prophet Zacharias: "For what is the good thing of him, and what is his beautiful thing, but the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins?" (Zach. ix. 17).

3. In order to conquer our evil desires we ought

to use even corporal means, such as mortification of the senses by fasting, watching, labor, and other works of penance. "He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sins" (1 St. Peter iv. 1).

4. The remembrance of the omnipresence of God, of His majesty and justice, of the bitter passion and death of Christ, the thought of death, judgment, and hell will also prove most powerful helps in overcoming our evil desires. "Walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh" (Gal. v. 16).

5. The most necessary means of preserving holy purity is the avoidance of bad occasions. In this warfare he is the strongest who takes to flight. "Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent: for if thou comest near them, they will take hold of thee" (Ecclus. xxi. 2).

Examples.

We can see in what detestation God holds the vice of lust from the judgments with which He visited mankind at the time of Noe, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha when He destroyed their cities (Gen. xix. 24). When during the wanderings in the desert the children of Israel committed sins of impurity with the daughters of Moab, twenty-four thousand of them were killed by the sword at the command of God (Num. xxv. 9). Because David had committed this sin with the wife

of Urias, God sent him word through the Prophet Nathan: "Therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised Me, and hast taken the wife of Urias the Hethite to be thy wife. Because thou hast given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme for this thing, the child that is born to thee shall surely die" (2 Kings xii. 10, 14).

The two old men who were inflamed with lust towards the chaste Susanna saw her every day in the house of her husband Joachim, where they had entrance, because they were both judges of Israel. But they no longer remembered the just judgments of God, and at last their unguarded looks led to the assault they made on the pious woman. But because Susanna resisted the wicked old men they accused her, and charged her with the same crime to which they had tried to seduce her, and they found faith with the people, because they belonged to the judges of the land. Susanna would have been stoned if God had not raised up Daniel in order to bring her innocence to light (Dan. xiii.). Thus from unguarded looks sprang unchaste desires and actions, false witness, and blood-guiltiness. David also would have been preserved from the sin he committed with the wife of Urias if he had kept watch over his eyes (2 Kings xi. 2). Holy Job, on the contrary, could say of himself: "I made a covenant with my eyes,

that I would not so much as think upon a virgin" (Job xxxi. 1). The thought of the omnipresence of God upheld the Patriarch Joseph in the hour of temptation; he said: "How then can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?" (Gen. xxxix. 9). It was the same thought which gave strength to Susanna steadfastly to resist the temptation by saying to the two wicked old men: "It is better for me to fall into your hands without doing it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord."

The Seventh Commandment.

Thou shalt not steal.

The Tenth Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

Sins Against Justice.

The seventh commandment forbids any injury done to our neighbor's property, and here also, as in the case of homicide or adultery, not only the action itself, but also the desire after strange goods is forbidden, because all sins of injustice spring from covetousness. "From within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, . . . thefts" (St. Mark vii. 21, 22).

On the contrary, the seventh commandment enjoins to leave every man in possession of his own, and to give him his due.

We injure our neighbor in his property by taking it away, by keeping it unjustly, or by damaging it.

1. We can take away strange property in a two-fold manner: by robbery or by theft. Robbery is the seizure of strange goods by force, and often leads to deeds of violence and even to homicide and murder, or endangers the life and body of the perpetrator of the crime.

Theft is the taking by stealth of strange property. It is not as grievous a sin as robbery, and yet we read: ". . . Nor thieves shall possess the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. vi. 10).

In the case of robbery, as in that of theft, the gravity of the sin depends on the value of the object stolen, and on the circumstances under which the crime is committed. Thus the value of what has been stolen may be small, and the sin a grievous one all the same, because of the fright which was caused to the person robbed. A trifling theft of victuals taken from a poor person who has to suffer want in consequence may become a very serious sin. Stealing anything from a church is nearly always a grievous sin because of the sacrilege connected with it. A series of small thefts cannot be committed, as a rule, without mortal sin.

There are other kinds of theft and robbery besides the above mentioned.

Theft is also committed by:

a. All those who cheat in buying and selling, who pass off bad or adulterated articles for good, or ask exorbitant prices, or sell with too small, and buy with too large, weight and measure, or pay with false coin. "Thou shalt not have divers weights in thy bag, a greater and a less. Thou shalt have just and true weight, for the Lord abhorreth him that doth these things, and He hateth all injustice" (Deut. xxv. 13, 15, 16).

b. Children who take away or squander the property of their parents, or servants who do the same by their masters.

c. Servants, workmen, and laborers who do not do their work, or do it badly.

d. Fathers of families who spend the money which they ought to employ to feed their wife and children in drink and gambling, or other wasteful ways.

e. Grown-up children who have received their patrimony in the lifetime of their parents and do not give them the share reserved for them or the allowance agreed on.

f. Public officials who neglect the duties of their office.

g. Beggars who ask alms without need, from idleness and avarice.

h. Swindlers who rob people of their own through all sorts of wiles and artifices.

Robbery is also committed by:

a. Those who keep servants, workmen, or laborers waiting for their rightful and well-earned wages, or defraud them altogether of such wages—one of the sins crying to heaven for vengeance.

b. Those who defraud widows and orphans of their own—another sin crying to heaven for vengeance.

c. Those who take advantage of the necessity of their neighbor in order to buy more cheaply from him, or who abuse his inexperience or their own power to extort anything from him.

d. Those who bring unjust actions or law-suits against others.

e. Merchants who fraudulently declare themselves bankrupt.

f. Usurers who take interest in cases where it is not lawful, or higher interest than the law allows, no matter whether openly or under the form of deductions, or by any other underhand methods.

g. Those who buy up the commodities of life in order to raise the prices.

h. Judges, solicitors, or business people who take bribes.

i. Those who start companies without real foundation or object, or who by false statements puff their object far beyond its real value or profit, in

order to enrich themselves at the expense of the shareholders, as is frequently done by bubble companies.

"Thou shalt not lend to thy brother money to usury, nor corn, nor any other thing. To thy brother thou shalt lend that which he wanteth, without usury: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all thy works" (Deut. xxiii. 19, 20).

"He that hideth up corn shall be cursed among the people: but a blessing upon the head of them that sell" (Prov. xi. 26).

"Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle? or who shall rest in Thy holy hill? He that hath not put out his money to usury, nor taken bribes against the innocent" (Ps. xiv. 1, 5).

2. All those persons keep strange property: who receive stolen goods, or sell articles of which they know for certain, or can reasonably suppose, that they are stolen. We must not buy anything unless we can justly presume that it is sold by its lawful owner, or in his name. The receiver is as bad as the thief. Also those who do not restore things they find, although they know the owner thereof, or could discover him if they tried. Those who do not take care of any property entrusted to them, or do not restore it in proper condition when asked to return it. Those who do not pay their debts, or contract debts knowing that they cannot pay them.

3. All those injure their neighbor's property:

who knowingly damage it, or do not prevent damage being done where it is their duty to do so. Of their number are those who destroy trees and plantations, or damage public parks, monuments, etc. Servants who do not properly feed and tend the cattle of their masters, ill-treat them, make them work unduly, compel them to run too fast, or to drag too heavy loads, squander provisions, and omit to do all in their power to guard their employer's property. Overseers, care-takers, officials who have to superintend the work of others, and those who have to watch over public safety and do not fulfil their duty, and cause harm or mischief through their neglect.

Restitution.

Unjust possessions cry out to the Lord, and draw down the anger of God on the unjust. "Woe to the wicked unto evil: for the reward of his hands shall be given him" (Is. iii. 11).

The unjust man's treasures do not profit him, sooner or later they will turn into a curse. "Set not thy heart upon unjust possessions, and say not: I have enough to live on: for it shall be of no service in the time of vengeance and darkness" (Ecclus. v. 1).

The day will come when the Lord will take an account of all His servants, and those who still owe anything shall be thrown into the prison, from

where they shall not come out till they have paid the last farthing (St. Matt. xviii. 34).

We must keep in mind the following points:

1. He who has taken or kept anything unjustly is bound to restore it, and he who has damaged or destroyed anything must make reparation.

It is no matter, moreover, whether he have done the deed himself, or whether another have done it at his instigation.

Nobody can receive pardon of his sin unless he make restitution as far as he can. "If the wicked man restore the pledge, and render what he had robbed, and walk in the commandments of life, and do no unjust thing: he shall surely live, and shall not die" (Ezech. xxxiii. 15).

2. He who has taken away or kept anything must restore the article if he still possesses it, and restore it to nobody but the lawful owner, if he be known or can be discovered, and, when the owner is dead, to his heirs, if they be known. But he is allowed to do so through the medium of another—for instance, his parish priest or confessor—who may act in the name of the person bound to make restitution in order to save his honor.

If the object stolen or kept unjustly has depreciated in value through the fault of the thief, he is bound to make up for that loss also. In the same way he must repair the loss which the owner has sustained by not being able to use his property for

some time. When, for instance, the tools or part of the tools are stolen from a workman, and he cannot work till he has provided himself with new ones, this loss also must be repaired by the thief. Of stolen money which has borne interest, the interest must be repaid as well as the principal.

If the owner cannot be discovered, or if the object stolen or kept is only a trifle which would not be missed, it is allowed to devote it to some good purpose: for instance, to give it to the poor, or to the Church, or to have Masses said for the repose of the soul of the owner, or to make a pious foundation. In this case, however, everything must be avoided which would have the appearance of a work of charity, because it ought not to happen that in the end a rogue should be praised for his almsdeeds.

3. If anybody possesses ill-gotten goods, and is not able on his death-bed to restore them himself, but reveals the fact to his heirs, or if they hear of it through any other channel, they are bound to repay everything the deceased would have been obliged to repay.

If several persons together have wronged another, they are responsible in this way, that, if one of them cannot refund his share of the theft, the others must step in. And if only one person were left, he would have to make restitution for the whole amount.

4. Those who are bound to make restitution or reparation must do so at once. If their delay cause any loss to the person wronged, they must repair this loss. If the person who has wronged the other is not able to repair the wrong at the present time, he is obliged to pay as much as he can, and the rest as soon after as possible. A man who is declared bankrupt by the civil law, and is so in reality, remains in conscience bound to make restitution to his creditors as soon as he is in better circumstances again.

5. He who has got possession of strange goods by mistake must give back what is left when the mistake is found out, or the equivalent of what he has saved by the use of the strange property. If, for instance, any one has got possession of a pair of shoes belonging to somebody else, he is obliged to give back another pair, because he has saved buying a pair for himself.

6. He who finds anything does not become the owner of the article till he has advertised it in the place where it was found, and nobody has claimed it. He who finds a treasure in his land has a right to keep it; if he finds it in another's property, half of the treasure belongs to the finder, the other half to the owner of the place. But these and similar cases are regulated by the laws of the respective countries, which must guide our conduct.

Reparation.

It may happen that somebody cannot regain his own property or something he has lent because another holds it, and will not restore it, or will not pay what he owes. In this case the rightful owner may take back his own, even without the knowledge of the holder, but only if what is thus withheld from him is indisputably his own property, and all violence is avoided. But with regard to demands for payment, it is very dangerous to repay one's self, because there is always a danger of deceiving one's self, of coveting what is not due to one, and of overrating one's own claims. Generally speaking, the following principles ought to guide us:

1. The demand must be based on right—for instance, where between employer and servant certain wages have been agreed on without any condition, and the employer refuses to pay the wages. But if the employer has only promised to raise the wages of the servant provided he were to be found honest and hard-working, the servant could not help himself to the difference, even if he thought he had fulfilled the condition.

2. The injured party must not have any other way of obtaining justice. If a person, for instance, can get the matter settled by law, he may not repay himself.

3. No sin may be committed in righting one's self

in this manner—for instance, lying and deceit may not be resorted to.

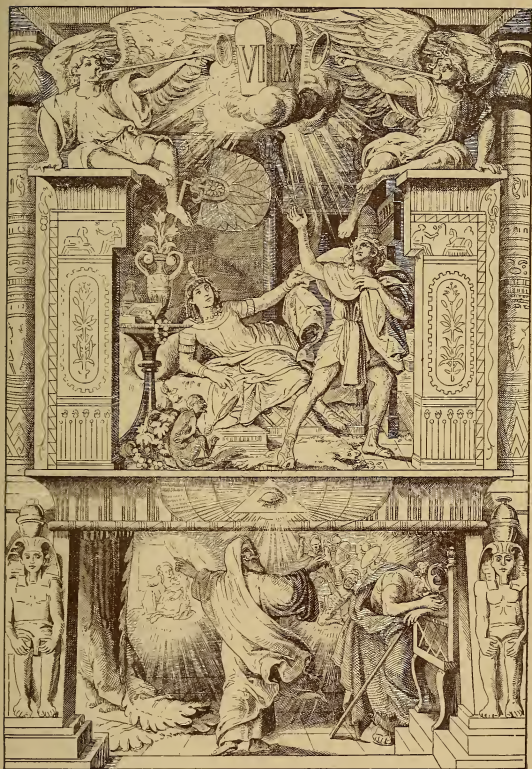
It is best in these cases to consult some good and pious person, and to ask somebody else to fix the exact amount of our claim.

Duties Enjoined by the Seventh and Tenth Commandments.

The seventh and tenth commandments enjoin the Christian to give to every one his due, and to use his own possessions for the good of human society. He is bound, therefore, to practise justice and benevolence. Of these we shall speak in treating of Christian perfection and of good works.

On the other hand, we are not forbidden to save up temporal goods for the day of need, for our old age, for our family, and even for future charitable works or foundations. We are commanded to do so without violating justice, by honest means, through industry and economy, without attaching our hearts to worldly possessions, without being miserly, without anxiety or losing confidence in the providence of God, who cares for us and who assures us that we are of far greater value in His eyes than the sparrows of whom none are lost. "Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither rust nor moth

"How can I do this wicked thing, and sin against my God?"—
Gen. xxxix. 9.



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"Nathan said to David: The son that is born to thee shall
surely die."—2 Kings vii. 14.

SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

THE SIXTH AND NINTH COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery.— Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife."

REFLECTION.—The body of the Christian, says St. Paul, is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and should, therefore, never be defiled with the vice of impurity. This vice is so degrading that the same apostle declares it should not even be mentioned by name among Christians. It makes man the slave of his base passions and lowers him to the level of the brute. On the other hand, the virtue of holy purity frees man from the thralldom of his passions, renders him similar to the angels and fit to behold the God of infinite purity, holiness, and beauty. "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." (Matt. v. 8.) We should prize this virtue above all earthly goods and be ready to make every sacrifice to preserve it.

PRACTICE.—Let us avoid every sinful occasion, every unbecoming conversation, and refrain from all improper looks and dangerous reading, lest we fall into the abominable vice of impurity. Let us watch carefully over our thoughts and affections, and invoke the holy names of Jesus and Mary as soon as we are tempted to impurity.

PRAYER.—O my God, grant that I may always serve Thee with a chaste body and a pure heart. O Mary, help me to overcome all temptations against purity. Amen.

doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (St. Matt. vi. 19, 20).

Application.

1. A Christian ought to examine from time to time, and especially before receiving the sacraments, whether he has not something to restore or to repair. For nobody knows how long he will live, and whether he will be able to make reparation before his last hour, for in the next world there is no chance of reparation; there we can only expiate and suffer.

2. Consider what folly it is to labor and to toil in order to gain worldly goods, and to keep them with remorse of conscience, knowing all the while that we must give them up sooner or later. For all this toil and trouble to suffer punishment and pain,—what an awful thought! "Set not thy heart upon unjust possessions, and say not: I have enough to live on: for it shall be of no service in the time of vengeance and darkness" (Ecclus. v. 1).

3. Let us take to heart what the wise Jesus Sirach says: "Riches are good to him that hath no sin on his conscience" (Ecclus. xiii. 30).

Examples.

The story of Achan and his children furnishes us with a dreadful example of how God punishes theft. The Israelites had been commanded by Josue to consecrate to the Lord all the gold and

silver they were to carry off at the taking of Jericho, and to lay them up as a treasure for the support of the Ark of the Covenant. But Achan had taken a scarlet garment, a rule of gold, and two hundred sicles of silver from the booty, and had buried them in the ground under his tent, and his sons and daughters had assisted him in the deed. But he was found out, and he was stoned with his sons and daughters, and their bodies were burnt (Josue vii.). Achab, who caused Naboth to be killed and took possession of his vineyard, perished miserably (3 Kings xxii. 34), and his wife, Jezabel, likewise for having taken part in the crime (4 Kings ix. 30-37). Even his children, seventy in number, were killed for the sin of their parents by the permission of God (4 Kings x. 7). Giezi, the servant of Eliseus, who had fraudulently obtained money and garments from Naaman, the Assyrian general, was punished with leprosy (4 Kings v. 27).

In the Old Covenant restitution was not only strictly commanded, but it was enjoined to give more than the value of what had been appropriated. The commandment ran thus: "If a man steal an ox or a sheep and kill or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for one ox, and four sheep for one sheep. If he have not wherewith to make restitution for the theft, he shall be sold. If that which he stole be found with him, alive, either ox or ass or sheep: he shall restore double. If any man hurt a

field or a vineyard, and put in his beast to feed upon that which is other men's, he shall restore the best of whatsoever he hath in his own field, or in his vineyard, according to the estimation of the damage" (Ex. xxii. 1, 3-5). He who had damaged another's property had to make reparation to the amount of the damage done, and add the fifth part of it into the bargain (Lev. vi. 5). We find a most beautiful example of conscientiousness in the elder Tobias. He had become so poor through almsgiving that Anna, his wife, had to keep him and herself by weaving. One day she brought home a young kid which had been given her for her work. And when her husband heard it bleating, he said: "Take heed, lest perhaps it be stolen, restore ye it to its owners, for it is not lawful for us either to eat or to touch anything that cometh by theft" (Tob. ii. 19-21). He did not mean that Anna had stolen the kid, but that it might have been stolen by the givers. Zacheus is another example of scrupulous honesty. As a tax-gatherer he could easily make a mistake in collecting the taxes. But as soon as he perceived it he used to restore what he had asked too much, and not only twofold, but fourfold (St. Luke xix. 8). In doing this he may have had in his mind that the injury he had inflicted on his neighbor by exacting too much required reparation, and also that his own carelessness deserved punishment.

Of the early Christians the Governor Pliny writes to the Emperor Trajan in the following words: "They solemnly pledge themselves to abstain from all crimes, never to commit theft or adultery, or to perjure themselves, never to break their word, and never to conceal any goods deposed with them."

The Eighth Commandment.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Sins Against the Eighth Commandment.

As the safety of life and property is based on the sacredness of marriage, so the welfare of human society rests on public confidence resulting from that veracity which every one has a right to exact from his neighbor. Therefore God forbids false testimony, *i.e.*, all untruthfulness in word and deed. An untruth in words is called a lie. By untruth in deeds we mean all actions which aim at deceiving our neighbor, all kinds of hypocrisy, insincerity, and dissimulation. "Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle? or who shall rest in Thy holy hill? He that speaketh truth in his heart, who hath not used deceit in his tongue" (Ps. xiv. 1, 3).

1. Lying means saying something contrary to what we think, and to give out as true what we

know to be false in order to deceive another. Anybody tells a lie, therefore, who purposely and deliberately utters an untruth. The amount of guilt in this sin depends on the importance of the testimony given, on the character of the person to whom the lie is told, and on the harm which it causes. A lie in confession, for instance, is nearly always a sacrilege, and consequently a lie of the gravest kind.

A lie which is told to get one's self or another out of a difficulty is called an officious lie. Such lies are told by mothers, for instance, when they tell untruths to fathers in order to hide faults committed by their children, and screen them from punishment. Servants and inferiors of any class often tell such lies in order to escape rebuke or punishment, or the obligation of making restitution when they have damaged anything.

2. When a Christian has committed a fault he must acknowledge it, and take the punishment he deserves, and not add a second sin to the first. "Be not ashamed to confess thy sins. For there is a shame that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that bringeth glory and grace" (Ecclus. iv. 31, 25).

If a lie we tell causes any injury to our neighbor it is called a malicious lie, and he who tells it is bound to make reparation to the amount of the injury he has caused.

2. Even those kind of lies which we call jocose lies are only allowed when the untruth told is so

obvious that it would strike any one at once, or when it is told in so harmless a manner that nobody is injured thereby. If, for instance, to the question, "What is the news?" a person were to answer, "According to the latest news the French are across the Rhine," he would not tell a lie. But if the answer were, "It is reported that the French have crossed the Rhine," the case would be different. It would be no sin, either, if a man were to say he had seen an ox flying. But often this kind of lying degenerates into contempt of our fellow-men. Thus if we make fun of somebody, or make him appear ridiculous in the eyes of others, and mortify him in this way, we commit sin.

Moreover, lies which people tell in joke may have the most serious consequences—for instance, when they cause terror and fright. Such jokes are unworthy of a Christian, although they may not always be dangerous. "But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall render an account for it in the day of judgment" (St. Matt. xii. 36).

3. The most grievous kind of lie is false testimony; it consists in declaring before a court of law, or before witnesses, that something is true which we know to be not so, or in denying something which we know to be true. If God is taken to witness in such a case, the false testimony given

becomes perjury. False testimony in a court of law is always a grievous sin, because it implies contempt of court and disregard of the obedience we owe to the authorities.

The same grievous sin is committed by those who bribe witnesses, or buy them with money, or influence them by promises; those who tamper with or forge documents, and thus procure unjust decisions from the law.

How grievous a sin it is to give false testimony appears from the words of Holy Scripture, where lying witnesses are called the children of the devil (3 Kings xxi. 13).

The injury which a false witness does to his neighbor will be turned against himself. "A lying witness shall perish" (Prov. xxi. 28).

4. Every conscious untruth told with the intent of deceiving is a sin, for it is an offence against God, the All-True, who has created us after His own image. It is an offence against our divine Redeemer, who is Truth, and has asked His Father to sanctify His disciples in truth (St. John xvii. 17). It is an offence against the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of Truth (St. John xvi. 13). But besides all this a lie is an injustice towards the person to whom it is told, because he is deceived, very frequently injured, and in any case insulted and treated with contempt. It is a sin against human society, which has a right to exact truth, and can-

not subsist without veracity. Lying is numbered among the most grievous sins by Holy Scripture.

"All liars shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone" (Apoc. xxi. 8). "The mouth that believeth, killeth the soul" (Wisd. i. 11). "A thief is better than a man that is always lying: but both of them shall inherit destruction" (Ecclus. xx. 27).

5. As we may not say anything untrue in order to deceive others, so we may not do anything in order to mislead them. This would be hypocrisy or dissimulation. Hypocrites either pretend to be better than they are, and especially try to appear just, virtuous, and pious, or they make others believe that they mean well by them in order to gain their confidence and then abuse them. Flattery is a similar kind of sin. It consists in speaking well of others to their face, attributing qualities to them which they do not possess, or praising in them what is not praiseworthy, in order to gain their favor. Flattery is never a single untruth, but a series of deliberate falsehoods, which generally take the form of actions also. Therefore Our Saviour so severely condemned the Pharisees who were guilty of this sin, by saying to them: "Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of

dead men's bones, and of all filthiness" (St. Matt. xxiii. 27).

6. Although we may not say anything untrue, there are cases in which it is allowed to conceal the truth. Not every one has a right to question another, and it is not always possible to silence an indiscreet questioner with the brief answer: "I won't tell you," or: "That is no business of yours." Such an answer would be taken as a simple affirmative. In these cases it is allowed to give a reply with a double meaning, or to make a mental reservation. If, for instance, a man is asked by another who has no right to the question: "Have you paid all your debts?" he may answer: "Yes," and add mentally: "those which I was able to pay," for the state of his finances is no concern of the other. But it would be quite different if the questioner had a right to ask him. When, for instance, a man wishes to borrow money of another, the latter has a right to ask whether the borrower has debts already, with a view to acting according to the answer he receives.

But such a mental reservation is never allowed when we are questioned by those who have a right to do so—for instance, the authorities. Nor may the truth ever be hidden, if such an act were injurious to the honor of God or of His Church. Nobody has a right, for instance, to recommend a man for an ecclesiastical preferment whom he

knows to hold unorthodox principles and opinions, for by hiding the truth he would enable that person to spread the poison of bad principles, and to aggravate the evil by the weight of the authority which the office would confer on him.

It is impossible to represent the ugliness and enormity of lying in a more graphic manner than Thomas of Aquinas has done. He says: "The liar bears in himself the image of the devil, who was a liar from the beginning. Those who imitate him are like unto false coins; when these false coins shall be produced on the Day of Judgment, and the Judge will ask, 'Whose image is this?' and the answer will be, 'The devil's,' He will say: 'Give unto the devil the things that are the devil's.'"

Examples.

The first liar was the devil, who through the serpent defrauded our first parents, and the whole human race of Paradise, and delivered them up to death and unspeakable misery (Gen. i. 3). Therefore Our Lord calls him the father of lies, and of liars it is written that they have the devil for their father (St. John viii. 44). The lie which Putiphar's wife uttered might have brought dire disgrace on Joseph (Gen. xxxix.) if the Lord had not intended him for great honors. If any lie could find an excuse, it would be the lie of St. Peter. He was sitting among the brutal rabble in the

court of Caiphas' palace, and saw how the inhuman soldiers cruelly ill-treated Our Lord. He could not have gone out without betraying himself, and was in fear that he would be treated in the same manner if he showed any sympathy for his poor captive Master. His denial was only what might be called an officious lie (St. Luke xxii. 55-62), and did not add to the ill-treatment of Our Lord. But oh, how deeply St. Peter repented of it! Tradition says he wept every time that he heard the cock crow. The lie of Ananias and Saphira, who concealed a part of the money for which they had sold their field, and tried to deceive St. Peter, was punished by sudden death (Acts v. 5, 10).

INJURING OUR NEIGHBOR IN HIS HONOR.

Under the heading of false testimony also fall those various sins by which we injure our neighbor in his honor and good name.

Honor is a real possession; Solomon says: "A good name is better than great riches" (Prov. xxii. 1).

And we are commanded through the mouth of Jesus Sirach: "Let no stain sully thy glory. Take care of a good name: for this shall continue with thee, more than a thousand treasures precious and great" (Ecclus. xxxiii. 24; xli. 15).

Therefore the eighth commandment forbids us

to attain the good name of our neighbor by speaking ill of him, which is done by the two sins of calumny and detraction. Furthermore, we may not injure the honor of our neighbor in our own mind by thinking evil of him, and consequently suspicion and rash judgments are also forbidden.

1. Saying anything against our neighbor which we know to be untrue is called calumny.

Calumny is a sin against truth, but it also becomes a sin against justice if it causes any loss to the calumniated person, and a sin against charity, if he has to suffer mortification, pain, and sorrow through it. How dreadful are the consequences to which it may lead! It may cause a man to be deprived of his living, his good reputation, his office; his happiness and his honor may be lost forever, and he may be falsely accused and condemned. "If a serpent biteth in silence, he is no better than backbiteth secretly" (Ecclus. x. 11). "The detractor is the abomination of men" (Prov. xxiv. 9).

The dreadful part of calumny is, that generally it is impossible to repair what has been done. If, for instance, it is said of a servant-maid that she is not honest, and if this poor person loses her place and cannot get another, and is obliged to go home to a poor mother, and, instead of helping her, becomes a burden to her, and is refused wherever she tries for a place, who can repair the harm done, —the grief of the parent, the tears of the child, the

bitterness which springs up in the heart of the innocently accused, the poverty and privations she has to suffer? Even if the calumniator retracts his words, many people will not believe him now, or only believe part of what he says. And will the retraction ever penetrate into all places where the calumny was spread?

Therefore calumniators will meet with a fearful judgment. "They who do such things are worthy of death: and not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them" (Rom. i. 32).

2. We are guilty of detraction if we reveal a fault of our neighbor to another who was ignorant of it, and thus lessen his honor and good name, and perhaps injure him in other ways as well. But we may also be guilty of detraction by being silent when we hear others speak ill of a neighbor, although we could defend or excuse him. A Christian should in general guard against speaking of his fellow-men unless he can say something good of them, and on no account ought he to suffer the absent to be spoken ill of, because they cannot defend themselves. "Hast thou heard a word against thy neighbor? let it die within thee, trusting that it will not burst thee" (Ecclus. xix. 10).

Detraction is a sin against charity, but frequently also against justice. Perhaps the person spoken of has already corrected himself, perhaps his sin is

not as great before God as it appears to man. We may see that a man has failed, but we are ignorant of the greatness of his temptations, we do not know how he struggled, how he fell. God alone knows!

“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? To his own lord he standeth or falleth. And he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand” (Rom. xiv. 4).

He who has injured his neighbor by detraction is no less bound to make reparation than the calumniator—but how will he repair the mischief he has done? In most cases it will be impossible.

On the other hand, we may reveal the faults of another, if by doing so we can contribute to his amendment or prevent future mischief. Thus we may draw the attention of parents or masters to the failings of their children or their pupils, in order that by being punished they may learn to amend their ways. But we are obliged to give testimony against our neighbor when we are questioned by persons who have a right to do so, for instance, by the authorities, and also in cases where we can prevent some injury or loss which could not be prevented without our disclosing what we know. In all these cases, however, we must use the greatest prudence in order that truth may not be violated. “Doing the truth in charity” (Eph. iv. 15).

3. We are not to lower our fellow-men in our own opinion either. This would be done if without

sufficient ground we were to suspect them of having done some wrong: for instance, if anything had been stolen, and we were to accuse another of being the thief, without having any external proof, and only trusting to the opinion we have formed of him. This would be a criminal suspicion, which in itself would be a sin against charity. But if we were to give utterance to our suspicion, this would be a rash judgment, and the sin would be much more serious. "Let not a man devise evil in his heart against his brother" (Zach. vii. 10).

Application.

1. The temptation to judge others, to speak ill of them, to repeat what we have heard of them, etc., is very great. Nearly all men are infected with this mania, and it is not even from malice, but for amusement that they indulge in this sin, as we often see in social gatherings. It is most necessary, therefore, to bridle our tongue, and not to speak too much. "In the multitude of words there shall not want sin: but he that refraineth his lips is most wise" (Prov. x. 19).

2. Sincere charity, which keeps us from many sins, will also be our best safeguard against lying, false testimony, calumny, detraction, false suspicion, and rash judgment. Let us cultivate this beautiful virtue in our hearts and in our words.

Let us be mild in judging others. While detesting sin, let us have compassion on the sinner, and remember that if he becomes embittered by our cavilling and uncharitableness, he will close his ears and heart against us, and become hardened instead of amending his ways.

3. Let us consider that we have the same and perhaps greater faults than those whom we judge so uncharitably. Perhaps we pronounce our own sentence in condemning our fellow-men.

Examples.

Heli, the high-priest, was guilty of suspicion. He perceived a woman who was praying for a long time before the Lord. He did not hear her voice, but he saw her lips moving, and thought she was drunk, and also told her so. But the woman was the wife of Elcana, and had gone with him to Silo, where the Ark of the Covenant was kept, in order to implore God to take from her the disgrace of being barren, and give her a son (1 Kings i. 9-13). How the suspicion of the high-priest must have hurt that holy woman! When on the day of Pentecost the Jews heard how the Apostles, filled with the Holy Ghost, spoke in divers tongues, many of them were quite ready with their judgment, and said mockingly: "These men are full of new wine" (Acts ii. 13). What a mistake they

had made! When the Apostle Paul had suffered shipwreck, but had saved himself on the isle of Melita with his companions, the inhabitants out of courtesy made a large fire that they might warm themselves. And when Paul had gathered together a bundle of sticks, and had laid them on the fire, a viper, coming out of the heat, fastened on his hand. And when the barbarians saw the beast hanging on his hand, they said one to another: "Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, who though he has escaped the sea, yet vengeance does not suffer him to live." And he indeed shaking off the beast into the fire, suffered no harm (Acts xxviii. 1-5).

From all these examples we see how easy it is to sin by false suspicion and rash judgment.

Duties Enjoined by the Eighth Commandment.

The eighth commandment enjoins various duties, both towards ourselves and towards our neighbor.

1. It is a duty for everybody to guard his honor and good name to the best of his ability, as only a blameless man can do useful work in human society. "Not rendering evil for evil, nor railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing" (1 St. Peter iii. 9).

The best way of preserving our good name is to fulfil both our religious duties and the duties of our state, and to avoid sin and even the appearance of

it. We must imitate the Apostle, who could say of himself: "Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed" (2 Cor. vi. 3).

2. We must be true and sincere in our dealings with our neighbor, respect and honor every one as a child of God, a follower of Jesus Christ, and a co-heir of the kingdom of heaven. It is moreover our duty to be prudent in our words, and to keep such secrets as have been confided to us. "Repeat not the word which thou hast heard, and disclose not the thing that is secret" (Ecclus. xlii. 1). "Take care of a good name: for this shall continue with thee, more than a thousand treasures precious and great" (Ecclus. xli. 15).

If anybody has been injured in his good name, he may try to obtain satisfaction through the law. "Let no stain sully thy glory" (Ecclus. xxxiii. 24).

There are cases in which it becomes a duty to exact that satisfaction should be made to our injured honor, especially if without its being done great scandal would be caused, or if the person injured in his honor would be hindered in or entirely cut off from his career in life. Superiors especially are bound to defend their good name in order that their subordinates may not take scandal, for it is of the greatest importance that a superior be blameless in the eyes of those under his charge. But on the other hand, we may never try to repair our honor by revenge or retaliation, and even when we

are obliged to insist on reparation being made, we may not hate or revile our adversary.

Application.

As in all temptations, so, also, in speaking watchfulness is the greatest safeguard against sin. The firm resolution not to offend with our lips will keep us not only from sin, but also from much annoyance and vexation. David prayed thus: "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth: and a door round about my lips" (Ps. cxl. 3).

2. The purity of our lips depends on the purity of our heart. If there is no guile or malice in our heart, there will be no guile or malice on our lips. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (St. Luke vi. 45).

Let us therefore not allow any feeling to spring up in our heart which cannot stand in the presence of God.

3. Let us take to heart the admonition of the Apostle: "Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth: but that which is good to the edification of faith, that it may administer grace to the hearers" (Eph. iv. 29).

The Commandments of the Church.

The Duty of Keeping the Commandments of the Church.

WHEN our blessed Saviour ascended into heaven, He charged His apostles to teach and to baptize, and He added these words: "Teaching them all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (St. Matt. xxviii. 20). A Catholic Christian is bound, therefore, to keep all those commandments which the apostles and their successors have given, and are still giving, for the Church has not only received power to teach and dispense the sacraments, but also to educate the faithful for the kingdom of God. She has been founded by Our Lord Jesus Christ as a school of salvation intended to prepare us for eternal life. We must therefore submit to her. Our Saviour says expressly: "If any one will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican" (St. Matt. xviii. 17).

And in order that none may think that these words are not meant for all cases in which the Church commands anything, He adds immediate-

ly: "Amen I say to you, whatsoever you shall bind upon earth, shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven" (St. Matt. xviii. 18).

And He tells us that everything the apostles shall ordain shall be ordained as in His name, and that they are to be obeyed as if He Himself spoke. "He that heareth you, heareth Me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me. And he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me" (St. Luke x. 16).

The apostles have always considered themselves as the delegates of Jesus Christ, having a right to give regulations and commandments. In the first assembly of the Church at Jerusalem the apostles there present enjoined that the Christians were to abstain from idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication, and they prefaced their decree with the following words: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us" (Acts xv. 28).

St. Paul also considered himself the delegate of Jesus Christ, and consequently of God: "For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us" (2 Cor. v. 20). He went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches and commanding them to keep the precepts of the apostles and the ancients (Acts xv. 41). He enjoined that the men were to pray with their heads uncovered, and that the women were to cover their

heads (1 Cor. xi. 4-6). He likewise made regulations concerning the celebration of holy communion (1 Cor. xi. 28-34), and concerning marriages between believers and unbelievers (1 Cor. vii. 12-15). And he praised the Corinthians for keeping his ordinances as he had delivered unto them (1 Cor. xi. 2).

2. The commandments and precepts of the Church have no other object but the salvation of souls. They are not given arbitrarily, and are not intended to force us to obedience, but they are for the faithful so many means of virtue wherewith to resist evil and to be confirmed in good.

God directs His Church to command those things to the faithful which they ought to do of themselves, in order to preserve them from tepidity and excite them to fervor and zeal.

The apostles and bishops have given many regulations and precepts in the councils of the Church, both for churches individually and for the Church in general. The Church, however, who has given the precepts, can annul them under changed circumstances, or dispense individuals or whole classes of people from the duty of observing them. The Pope can annul the commandments of the Church in general, the bishop only those which were given for his diocese. The Pope, moreover, can dispense the faithful of any diocese from observing the commandments of the Church, but the bishops only

those of their own dioceses. A dispensation cannot be obtained without good reasons. If the reasons alleged do not exist, and have therefore been falsely stated, a dispensation thus obtained under false pretences is invalid. But there are cases where a Catholic is dispensed by circumstances, that is to say, when the observance of the precept would cause serious inconvenience or considerable loss. But the non-observance of a commandment of the Church is never permitted where it would look like contempt or denial of our faith.

3. There are six chief commandments of the Church. It is beyond doubt that they date from apostolic times, although they were only written down in later years. At first it was not necessary to write down all these precepts, because they were universally observed. Only when the Christians had grown tepid, and fervor began to cool, was it required to give express commandments. St. Augustine agrees with all the other Fathers and doctors of the Church when he says: "When the authority of Holy Scripture commands anything, it is beyond doubt that we must do what we read there; the same should be done when the Church constantly practises anything all over the world. To dispute about it is proud, overbearing folly; the despisers of the practices of Holy Church ought to be punished like the transgressors of the divine law."

246 *The First Commandment of the Church.*

The six chief commandments of the Church are:

1. To hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation.
2. To fast and abstain on the days appointed.
3. To confess at least once a year.
4. To receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time.
5. To contribute to the support of our pastors.
6. Not to marry persons who are not Catholics, or who are related to us within the fourth degree of kindred, nor privately without witnesses, nor to solemnize marriage at forbidden times.

The First Commandment of the Church.

To hear Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation.

The Observance of Holydays.

This first commandment enjoins upon us to keep the holydays instituted by the Church in the same way as we keep Sundays. These holydays are intended to bring before our minds the life of Our Lord in its chief mysteries, and to commemorate the glorious virtues of the saints of God. They are to give us an opportunity at the same time for giving thanks for all the graces which Almighty God has bestowed on the saints, and through them to us by the merits of Jesus Christ, for instructing, edify-

ing, and sanctifying ourselves and obtaining God's blessing, wherefore we are to celebrate these days in the same way as Sunday, by prayer, hearing the word of God, reception of the sacraments, abstaining from servile work, and assisting at Mass.

Everything which has been said of the observance of Sunday applies, therefore, to holydays of obligation (*vide* p. 137).

1. The Church obliges us to assist at holy Mass, because the holy Mass is the chief act of religion, because it brings before our minds the mysteries of our redemption, and obtains all graces for us. And, indeed, no exhortation, no commandment should be needed; lively faith in Our Saviour, who offers Himself for love of us on the altar, should be a sufficient motive to make us go to Mass. The assistance at Mass used to be the first business of all Christians, and only when faith and charity began to cool was it necessary to give the precept that everybody was to be present at the celebration of the august mysteries, at least on those days which are the most sacred in the life of Our Lord, or on which the memory of the Blessed Virgin Mary or of the saints is celebrated.

2. We are therefore commanded under pain of mortal sin to hear Mass on all Sundays and holydays of obligation, and only urgent circumstances can excuse us from this duty. Business by no means dispenses us, if we can attend to it at any

other time. The claims of society, for instance, entertaining a visitor who happens to call at the hour of Mass, would be no excuse, as duty comes before politeness. A slight indisposition which would not be aggravated by going to Mass does not exempt us from the obligation. Nor may we think that being on a journey is a sufficient excuse, if we are travelling in a Catholic country where we are able to assist at Mass. On no account can assistance at the afternoon service take the place of hearing Mass. Hearing Mass on a week-day may show our good intention, with which God will be pleased, but it does not fulfil the obligation which we have of being present on Sundays and holydays.

It is a most grievous sin, and one, alas! very frequently committed by the rich and well-to-do, to go on journeys and pleasure-trips on Sundays and holydays, and to neglect the duty of hearing Mass, a sin which is generally accompanied by desecration of the Sunday as well. In this case the fathers and mothers of families are not only responsible for themselves, but also for their children and their servants. An equally grievous sin is committed by those who carry on public business on Sundays and holydays of obligation, such as judicial proceedings, public works, etc., if others are thereby prevented from hearing Mass; and the sin is shared by all who take part in business of this kind, and neglect to hear Mass in consequence. And, al-

though the persons who transgress this commandment are not disgraced in the opinion of the world, as used to be the case in the Old Covenant and in the ages of the early Christians, the curse of God rests on them none the less. For him who lightly sets aside the commandments of the Church, that same Church will be the corner-stone which, while being a sign for the resurrection of many, will be the cause of his fall.

On the contrary, illness and weak health dispense from going to Mass, if they make it impossible to walk as far as the church, or to stay there for a prolonged time. Duties of our state which cannot possibly be neglected are likewise an excuse; also works of charity which must be exercised during the hours of service—for instance, nursing the sick. If all the members of a family cannot assist at Mass, they ought to make arrangements to go in turns, so that the same person does not remain at home always or more frequently than the others. And, lastly, it is to be remarked that even children are obliged to go to Mass on Sundays and holydays as soon as they have come to the use of reason, *i. e.*, when they have made their first confession.

3. The obligation of assisting at holy Mass includes two additional conditions: we must hear an entire Mass, and we must hear it devoutly. For the sacrifice of the holy Mass is one great act out

of which no separate part can be taken, in the same way as the life of Our Lord on earth was one great event. No essential part of Mass may be missed, therefore, but we must be present from the first sign of the cross which the priest makes to the blessing which he gives the people. Carelessness on this point and missing a considerable part of holy Mass not only deprives us of the fruit of the holy sacrifice, but may also quite invalidate the fulfilment of our obligation. We are, moreover, bound to carry out the intention of Our Lord and of holy Church, viz., to let the exterior action produce its effect in our soul, and to meditate on the holy mysteries as far as we can, *i. e.*, to assist at them with devotion.

4. Holy Mass may be heard in any church, but it is advisable to hear it in one's own parish church. This is, in the first place, a profession of one's communion with the other members of the parish, and a good example which we give to those who are most nearly connected with us. Besides, the holy sacrifice of the Mass is specially offered by the priest for his parishioners on Sundays and holydays of obligation, and also on such days as are no longer holydays of obligation but are still kept as solemn feasts by the Church—for instance, the feasts of some apostles. Therefore the Church wishes us to assist at Mass on those days, although the obligation of doing so no longer exists.

Consideration.

1. Holydays are devoted in a special manner to the consideration of the sacred mysteries which are celebrated on those days. They are rather days for devout meditation than days of rest and recreation, although both rest and recreation are allowed. We are to live in the event of the feast we keep. At Easter, for instance, we are to rise with Christ; on Ascension Day we are to accompany Our Lord to Mount Olivet and see Him ascend to heaven there; and at Pentecost we are to receive the Holy Ghost with the Apostles. This is the right spirit in which the Christian year should be observed.

2. The sacrifice of the holy Mass is the source of all grace, the sun of the spiritual life, the greatest treasure we can find. If people could only see with their bodily eyes what graces pour down from heaven in holy Mass, they would throng in crowds to be present there.

3. What privations and pains does not man suffer in order to earn or save a little money! And in the holy Mass infinite riches are offered to him—help, strength, grace, comfort, eternal bliss! We see, therefore, that the Sundays and holydays are truly days of salvation, because every blessing for the soul of man is derived from them.

Examples.

Although God Himself instituted the Sabbath, He did not intend that no other holyday should be observed. The remembrance, especially of the great historical events in the election and formation of the people of Israel, was to be kept alive by certain days being set apart for that purpose.

Therefore Moses instituted three great festivals at the command of God:

The Passover (Pasch) in remembrance of the coming out of Egypt. This festival lasted seven days, on the first and seventh of which it was forbidden to work. On this festival the Israelites were commanded to slay the Paschal lamb in remembrance of the lamb they had eaten before their departure from Egypt, and with the blood of which they had sprinkled their door-posts, in order that the destroying angel, who was sent to kill the first-born of the Egyptians, might pass by their houses. They were not allowed to use any leaven during the Paschal week, because the Jews had not been able to leaven their bread in the haste of their departure, —wherefore this feast was also called the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (Lev. xiii. 6).

The Feast of Pentecost was celebrated in memory of the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai which had taken place fifty days after the departure from

Egypt. It was the harvest festival at the same time, and thanksofferings were made, and joyful banquets were held (Lev. xxiii. 16). The Feast of Tabernacles was a festival of thanksgiving for the harvest safely brought in, and was also intended to keep before the minds of the Israelites the remembrance of their wanderings in the desert, where they had been obliged to live in tents. It lasted eight days, and all those who were of the race of Israel had to dwell in bowers made of branches (Lev. xxiii. 42), and every day holocausts and libations were offered to the Lord (Lev. xxiii. 34).

The Feast of Trumpets was the New Year of the Jews. It fell in our month of September, and was announced by the sound of trumpets (Lev. xxiii. 24).

Besides these feasts a day of penance was kept, the great Day of Atonement, five days before the Feast of Tabernacles. It was a strict fast-day, and the Israelites were not allowed to touch any food from the eve of the feast to the evening of the day itself (Lev. xxiii. 27).

The New Moons were half-holydays. Work was allowed on them, but solemn sacrifices had to be offered.

These festivals were all ordained by God Himself. Later on, the Feast of Purim was added to the number as a day of thanksgiving for the happy deliverance of the Israelites by the intercession of

Queen Esther, when Aman, the minister of King Assuerus, had planned their destruction (Esth. vii. 7 *et seq.*). After the Machabees had cleansed the Temple desecrated by King Antiochus, and consecrated it again, the Feast of Dedication was kept every year (2 Mach. x. 6). Our Lord Himself went to Jerusalem for this feast (St. John x. 22), and He also used to go up for the Feast of the Pasch, thus giving us an example of faithful observance of holydays. Of all the devout people in the Old Testament who distinguished themselves by their fidelity in assisting at the religious services of the Jews we will only mention the elder Tobias, of whom it is written: "When all went to the golden calves which Jeroboam, king of Israel, had made, he alone fled the company of all and went to Jerusalem to the Temple of the Lord, and there adored the Lord God of Israel, offering faithfully all his first-fruits, and his tithes" (Tob. i. 5, 6).

The Second Commandment of the Church.

To keep the days of fasting and abstinence.

Fasting and Abstinence.

The ecclesiastical year is not only intended to remind us of the life, passion, and death of Jesus Christ, but also to furnish us with the means of modelling our lives on the life of Our Saviour.

Therefore we rejoice on days which invite us to thanksgiving and joy, and we mourn on those days on which Our Lord Himself mourned, suffered, and died for the human race. One of the chief expressions of mourning is abstaining from food and superfluous drink. Therefore the Church has instituted fasts for the days of mourning, and has given certain precepts on the way of observing these fasts.

1. Fasting means in general abstaining from lawful sensual enjoyment, and in a more restricted sense imposing on ourselves privations with regard to the quantity of food we take, and also with regard to those kinds of food which please the palate and which we are least inclined to give up. First among these rank the different kinds of flesh-meat, wherefore their use is forbidden on fast-days. We must abstain from them in the spirit of obedience to the Church as well as from love of God and Our Saviour, in order to do penance for our sins and to exercise ourselves in virtue. Fasting must be done therefore in devout and penitential dispositions and with the earnest intention of satisfying the Divine Justice in some small measure for our sins. Fasting is calculated at the same time to suppress our evil desires, to lessen temptation, and to render our mind more capable of contemplating divine things. The benefit of fasting is summed up by the Church in the Preface of the holy Mass

for the season of Lent: "O God, who by bodily fasting dost repress vices, elevate the mind, bestow virtue and rewards," etc.

2. Fasting is expressly enjoined in Holy Scripture, especially in time of great distress, as a means of regaining the favor of God.

The Lord spoke through the Prophet Joel the following words to the people of Israel: "Be converted to Me with all your heart, in fasting, and in weeping, and in mourning" (Joel ii. 12).

It is also recommended as a powerful remedy against sin, and even as a protection against the spirits of darkness. "But this kind is not cast out but by prayer and fasting" (St. Matt. xvii. 20).

Fasting done in a right spirit gains merit for us in the sight of God. But this applies only to fasting practised with humility, not to Pharisaical fasting which some people parade before men in order to appear virtuous, as the Pharisees did of old. Therefore Our Lord admonishes us to fast in secret, and not to let men see that we do so, and He adds: "Thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay thee" (St. Matt. vi. 18).

But it would be contrary to the spirit of the Church if we were to abstain from flesh-meat on the days appointed, but compensate ourselves by other kinds of delicate and costly food and drink, which often flatter the palate more than flesh-meat. The commandment was originally worded thus:

Thou shalt abstain from flesh-meat and all dainty food. Fasting must impose a privation, a sacrifice, else it has no value.

3. There are two kinds of fast-days: fast-days in the strict sense of the word, on which only one full meal is allowed; and days of abstinence, on which the use of flesh-meat is forbidden. But certain days are days of fasting and abstinence at the same time; on these we are allowed to have only one full meal, and must abstain from flesh-meat as well.

The fast-days, on which we are allowed to have only one full meal, are: All the days of Lent except Sundays, but not the holydays occurring in this season; the Ember Days, viz., Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday after (1) the first Sunday in Lent, after (2) Whitsunday, (3) after the fourteenth day of September, and (4) after the third Sunday of Advent; and the vigils, *i. e.*, the eves, of Whitsunday, of the Assumption, of All Saints, and of Christmas. On these days it was the custom not to eat anything before sunset, but, condescending to the increasing weakness of mankind, the Church first allowed food to be taken before sunset, and afterwards to change the hour of the principal meal to noon, and to take at night some slight refreshment (collation), which, however, is not to exceed eight ounces. Besides the full meal and collation, custom has made it lawful to take about two ounces of bread, without but-

ter, and a cup of some warm liquid, as coffee or tea, in the morning. This precept is binding on all Christians without difference of sex from their completed twenty-first year to the beginning of old age. Dispensed from its observance, however, are invalids, hard-working people, travellers, and soldiers in garrison as well as in camp. Delicate people, also, and those recovering from an illness are exempt. Persons who cannot bear fasting without detriment to their health can obtain a dispensation, but they must apply for it to their parish priest or confessor, as nobody may dispense himself.

It is allowed, also, to drink out of meal times in order to quench thirst or to help digestion. But here also we must observe temperance, and only satisfy the want of the body. Abstaining from drink is a very appropriate way of supplying for fasting when we are dispensed from the obligation.

c. The days of abstinence on which we are obliged to abstain from flesh-meat, but may have the ordinary number of meals, are: All the Fridays of the year, and in some dioceses all the Saturdays as well. Formerly it was forbidden to eat white meats (milk, butter, eggs, cheese, etc.), on those days, but this is now allowed in most dioceses. This precept is binding for all who have attained their seventh year, and for those as well who have passed the age of sixty. But even here the Church mitigates the law in certain cases. For instance,

in most pastorals the use of flesh-meat is conceded to travellers, as they often have not the opportunity of procuring other kinds of food; moreover, to those who have not a household of their own and are obliged to eat at the table of non-Catholics; to soldiers, except on Good Friday, and to the very poor whose destitution allows them no choice of food. But it is always forbidden to eat fish and flesh-meat at the same meal on a fast-day.

(*d.*) Days of both fasting and abstinence, *i.e.*, days on which it is not allowed to have more than one full meal nor to eat flesh-meat, are: All the Fridays of Lent, the Fridays of the Ember weeks, Ash-Wednesday, and Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy Week—for in some dioceses the Wednesday of Holy Week is included in this rule.

The rules for fasting for each diocese are published every year by a Lenten pastoral, and are strictly binding for us.

4. The Pope can dispense in general, and the bishops their subordinates individually. Parish priests and confessors can only give dispensations when this is expressly mentioned in the Lenten pastoral, but they are the judges whether any person be bound to fast or whether he be exempted. A person dispensed from abstinence is not thereby dispensed from fasting, and *vice versa*, if he is allowed to have several meals a day, this does not

imply that he need not keep the abstinence. And in these, as in all other cases, the rule holds good that a dispensation attained under false pretences is invalid.

Persons who are travelling or staying in a strange diocese may avail themselves of any mitigation or dispensation granted for that diocese, but a traveller or a stranger may not make use of a dispensation of his diocese which is not accepted in the diocese where he is staying at the time, unless he have a personal dispensation.

5. Some people condemn the custom of abstaining from flesh-meat on certain days, and in support of their opinion quote these words of Our Lord: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man" (St. Matt. xv. 11).

And again the words of the Apostle Paul: "If any of them that believe not invite you, and you be willing to go: eat of anything that is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake" (1 Cor. x. 27).

But to their assertions we oppose the following explanations:

The scribes and Pharisees had reproached the disciples for not washing their hands before sitting down to eat. But this precept was nowhere found in the Law. On the other hand, it was written in the Law that parents ought to be honored. Therefore Our Lord replied: How can you reproach

My disciples for not observing a mere custom, whereas you do not keep the Law, which commands to honor your parents, for you teach: Whosoever shall say to father or mother: The gift whatsoever proceedeth from me shall profit thee, need not honor his parents. Therefore your doctrine makes you transgress the Law. To eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man, but an unclean heart defiles him, for from such a heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, etc.—We see, therefore, that Our Lord did not refer at all to any forbidden food.

When St. Paul says that it is lawful to buy in the market anything which is offered for sale, without being in conscience bound to inquire, and that we may eat anything which is put before us by unbelievers, he alludes to flesh offered to idols. The Christians were not allowed knowingly to eat of it, but the Apostle tells them that they are not bound to ask in the market, or in the house of unbelievers, whether the meat placed before them has been used for sacrifice. But he adds: "If any one says: This has been sacrificed to idols: do not eat of it for this reason that another may not take scandal." This text of Holy Scripture establishes exactly the contrary of what the adversaries of fasting wish to prove by quoting it.

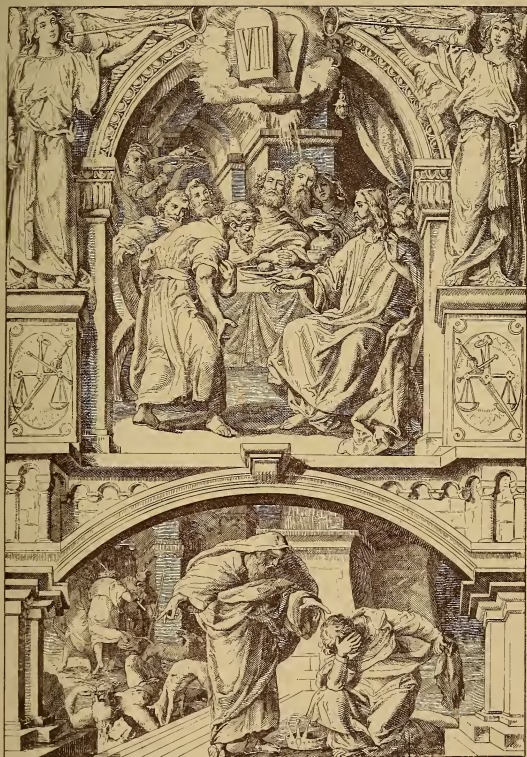
The apostle further predicts that people would arise, who, blinded by the devil, would forbid mar-

riage and the use of certain meats. This came to pass, when several heretics like Marcion and Manes, the founders of the Marcionites and Manicheans, prohibited both the former and the latter. But these heretics wished to abolish marriage altogether because they considered it impure, and Manes entirely forbid the use of flesh-meat, of milk and wine, and of certain other kinds of food. The Church, however, does not pronounce flesh-meat to be unclean in itself, else we should never be allowed to touch it, but she enjoins upon the Christian to abstain from it on the days dedicated to the memory of the passion and death of Our Lord as a little sacrifice which we are to unite with the great sacrifice Our Saviour offered for him. Jesus Christ offered His own sacred flesh for us, and we are to abstain from the use of flesh on those days on which we principally commemorate and meditate on the passion of our blessed Lord. But that even on those days it is not absolutely forbidden to eat flesh-meat appears from the exceptions which the Church admits in many cases.

The Church, has, however, as we have before observed, the right of giving commandments, and she uses this right for leading Christians to higher perfection.

That the apostles themselves made regulations with regard to the different kinds of food to be

"Zacheus said: If I have wronged any man of anything, I restore him fourfold."—St. Luke xix. 8.



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"Elias said to Ahab: In this place, wherein the dogs have licked the blood of Naboth, they shall lick thy blood also."—3 Kings xxi. 19.

SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

THE SEVENTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

**“Thou shalt not steal.—Thou shalt not covet
thy neighbor's goods.”**

REFLECTION.—We ought to be content with those goods which God in His goodness has given us, be they few or many, and not to seek anxiously to enrich ourselves or to gratify our passions, lest we be thereby led to covet and appropriate to ourselves what belongs to our neighbor. We should be just towards every one and make a good use of all our means. Riches are often dangerous to their possessors, for it is, indeed, very difficult to refrain from gratifying one's passions, when one has at his disposal so many means to do so. Honesty is the best policy, for whatever is unjustly acquired does not confer true happiness in this life and forfeits, besides, the happiness of the next.

PRACTICE.—Let us pay our debts, respect the property of others, avoid most conscientiously every act of injustice, make a good use of the means God has entrusted to us, and give liberally to God's Church and poor.

PRAYER.—O my God, deign to detach me from all inordinate affection for earthly goods, and enable me always to deal justly and charitably with my fellow-men. O Mary, help me to make a good use of the goods of this world. Amen.

used can be proved from the fact that they commanded the faithful to abstain from blood and from things strangled (Acts xv. 20).

Application.

1. It is written : "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away" (St. Matt. xi. 12.) In fasting we do violence to ourselves in repressing our sensual appetites. Let us, therefore, consider fasting in the light of truth, not as a burden, but rather as a means of virtue, and let us gladly seize this means in order to weaken our evil desires and to fortify ourselves in the warfare against sensuality.

2. We may sometimes be in a position not to be able to observe the law of fasting in its whole extent, and to be obliged to avail ourselves of the modifications which the Church allows in certain cases, or ask for a total dispensation from fasting. But let us conscientiously do all we can, and, if our bodies are not able to fast, let us keep up the spirit of fasting, at least. Let us supply by other good works for what we are unable to do by bodily penance.

"Is not this rather the fast that I have chosen? loose the bands of wickedness, undo the bundles that oppress, let them that are broken go free, and break asunder every burden. Deal thy bread to the

hungry, and bring the needy and the harborless into thy house: when thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not thy own flesh" (Is. lviii. 6, 7).

3. Fasting must be accompanied by a supernatural intention. It must be done in a true spirit of penance, with horror for past sins, and with a firm resolution of amendment, else it has no value in the eyes of God. At the time of the Prophet Isaias the Israelites fasted, but their fast was not pleasing to God; therefore Isaias exclaimed: "Why have we fasted, and Thou hast not regarded: have we humbled our souls, and Thou has not taken notice? Behold in the day of your fast your own will is found. Behold you fast for debates and strife, and strike with the fist wickedly. Do not fast as you have done until this day, to make your cry to be heard on high" (Is. lviii. 3, 4).

4. A way of fasting which is very pleasing to God is to abstain from or curtail food in order to gain the means of giving alms. This good work adds to the merit of fasting, in the same way as it makes prayer more acceptable to God. The Angel Raphael declared unto Tobias: "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasure of gold: for alms delivereth from death, and the same is that which purgeth away sins, and maketh to find mercy and life everlasting" (Tob. xii. 8, 9).

For this reason fasting-days used always to be

days of almsgiving in Catholic families, and in many Catholic houses it is still the custom to give alms regularly on all Fridays.

Examples.

No practice of the Catholic Church is more strongly confirmed by Holy Scripture than the precept of fasting.

In the Old Covenant very strict fasts were kept. As soon as any affliction came over Israel, the whole nation fasted. When the eleven tribes had lost a battle against the Benjamites, they went to the house of God and sat and wept before the Lord and fasted till the evening to express their mourning (Judges xx. 26). When David heard of the death of Abner, his general, he fasted the whole day (2 Kings iii. 35). The inhabitants of Jabes also fasted after the death of Saul (1 Kings xxxi. 13), and David fasted when his child was ill (2 Kings xii. 16). When Holofernes, the general of Nabuchodonosor, went to war against Israel, the people were seized with dread and horror, and they "cried to the Lord with great earnestness, and they humbled their souls in fastings and prayers, both they and their wives" (Judith iv. 8). The Jews, likewise, proclaimed a fast on hearing that King Assuerus had commanded their nation to be destroyed (Esth. iv. 3), and when Esther resolved to intercede

with the king and to beg him to revoke the cruel edict, not only she and her maids fasted for three days and nights, but all the Jews who dwelt at Susan did the same (Esth. iv. 16).

Even the pagan people of Ninive published a fast, and men and beasts touched no food, and the cattle were not allowed to graze nor to drink water, in order that God might be reconciled and His pardon obtained (Jonas iii. 7).

Pious Jews used to keep regular fasts We read, for instance, of Judith that, after she had become a widow she fasted all the days of her life except the Sabbaths, the new moons, and festivals (Judith viii. 6). And of the venerable widow Anna we know that she served God night and day with prayer and fasting (St. Luke ii. 3). Many other examples could be quoted.

Christ Our Lord confirmed by His example what the devout people of the Old Covenant had practised. He fasted forty days and forty nights in preparation for His public ministry (St. Matt. iv. 2). The apostles followed the example of their Master, and prepared for all important business not only by prayer, but also by fasting. They fasted as often as they exercised the sacred ministry, and when the Holy Ghost said to them: "Separate Me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them," they fasted again before laying their hands on them (Acts xiii. 2, 3).

St. Paul himself, when he was waiting for a further revelation after the wonderful vision which he had seen on the way to Damascus, did not eat or drink for three days (Acts ix. 9), and among the many hardships he bore, he mentions fasting as one (2 Cor. xi. 2). He fasted together with Barnabas before ordaining priests in all the churches (Acts xiv. 22). In imitation of this custom of the apostles, the bishops still fast in our day before ordaining priests and consecrating churches.

The fasts of the early Christians were very strict, for they took no food nor touched any wine the whole day till sunset. Pious Christians ate nothing but a little bread and salt after sunset, and some touched no food at all for several days in Holy Week. A fast was kept in remembrance of the forty days' fast of Our Lord; in the beginning, however, it was not regulated by any precept, but was the natural outcome of Christian piety. Besides, there were fasts on the fourth and sixth days of the week (Wednesday and Friday): on Wednesday because the Jews had resolved on that day to take Jesus Christ prisoner, and on Friday because it was the day of the Passion. The apostolic constitutions say that Jesus Christ Himself instituted these fasts, and they threaten lay persons who do not observe them with excommunication, and bishops and clerics with suspension from their

office. These fasts were called the Fasts of the Stations. They are mentioned in the "Pastor" by Hermas, one of the earliest Christian writers. Hermas relates: "When I was fasting on the top of a mountain, and giving thanks to God, I saw the Pastor sit beside me, and He asked: 'Why comest thou hither so early?' And I answered: 'Because I keep the Station.' And He asked: 'What is the Station?' And I answered: 'The fast.'"

In the course of time the manner of fasting was regulated by the Church and the Ember Days were also added. At the beginning of each season people fasted in thanksgiving for the benefits they had received in the last quarter of the year, and in expiation of the sins committed during that period. This fast was intended at the same time to draw down the grace of the Holy Ghost on the priests to be ordained on Ember Saturday. These quarterly fasts occupy three days (Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday), as the quarter of the year is made up of three months. They were first introduced in the churches of Rome, and spread from thence over the whole of Christendom.

All the Eastern Churches, those most ancient nurseries of Christianity, have retained the practice of fasting even after their separation from the Roman Church; they keep a much more rigid fast even than that practised by the Church of Rome.

The Third and Fourth Commandments of the Church.

To confess our sins at least once a year, and to receive the Holy Eucharist during the Easter time.

On Yearly Confession and Easter Communion.

It is one of the consequences of our fallen state, that we carry in ourselves many defects and imperfections, that we often succumb in the struggle with our evil inclinations and the inborn perverseness of our heart, and sometimes fall more or less voluntarily into grievous sins. But God in His great mercy has given us a means by which we may cleanse ourselves, heal our soul, renew our fervor, and obtain grace and pardon. This means is the Sacrament of Penance. But even this did not satisfy His loving heart. In His infinite mercy He gave Himself for our food as a pledge of eternal life. This act of love ought to impel us to procure for ourselves such a wonderful treasure of grace, and to preserve ourselves pure so as to be able to receive it worthily.

And, indeed, in the early ages of the Church all those who assisted at Mass received the body of the Lord. It was only when tepidity began to spread among Christians that the faithful had to be compelled to receive holy communion at Christ-

mas, Easter, and Pentecost; and at last the Fourth Lateran Council decreed: "All the faithful of both sexes who have come to the age of reason must faithfully confess their sins to their own priest in secret at least once a year, and reverently receive the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist (holy communion) at least at Easter, else they shall be refused entrance to the Church, and after death they shall not receive Christian burial."

Examples.

The holy King Louis IX. of France went to confession every Friday. St. Francis of Sales and St. Charles Borromeo confessed every week, and their whole household every month. Pope Clement VII. confessed every day. St. Francis Xavier also confessed every day when he had an opportunity. If these holy men, who kept such guard over their words and actions, felt the need of purifying themselves from their sins every week, nay, every day, how much greater will be the need of those who swallow sin like water!

St. John Chrysostom teaches us how dangerous it is to live in mortal sin and to put off confession. He used to exhort his hearers to have recourse to the Sacrament of Penance as often as they had offended God by sin. "I am ready day and night to hear confession. If anybody were to sin at night, let him come and wake me from my sleep,

and I will hear his confession." The saint, moreover, strongly blames those who only go to communion three times in the year.

FREQUENT COMMUNION.

We are told of the early Christians in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles that they daily broke bread from house to house. The Syriac version of the Acts says expressly that the reception of holy communion naturally depended on the opportunities of offering the holy sacrifice of the Mass. When Mass could be celebrated every day, the faithful communicated daily. Those who could not receive holy communion every day, according to St. Justin Martyr, communicated every Sunday at least. During the times of persecution, when the Christians could not assemble regularly, they were allowed to carry home the Blessed Sacrament, in order to refresh themselves with it every day. St. Cyprian says: "As we are to progress daily in our sanctification, we are to receive Our Lord daily, that His grace may increase in us." St. Basil relates that in his congregation at New Cæsarea it was the custom to communicate four times a week: on Sundays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. The following beautiful words are taken from St. Ambrose: "Receive every day what profits thee every day. Live in such a manner that thou mayst

be worthy to receive daily. He who is not worthy to receive every day, is not worthy to receive after a year."

The Fifth Commandment of the Church.

To contribute to the support of our pastors.

The Support of Our Pastors.

That the faithful are bound to contribute to the support of their pastors is proven by repeated passages of Holy Scripture. We read in the Old Testament: "All the first fruits which the children of God offer belong to the priest" (Num. v. 9, 10). And that Ezechias commanded "the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give to the priests and the Levites their portion, that they might attend to the law of the Lord" (2 Paral. xxxi. 4).

Thus in the Old Law the people were obliged to give the first fruits of their harvests to the priest, for the Lord said to Moses: "Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them: When you shall have entered into the land which I will give you, and shall reap your corn, you shall bring sheaves of wheat, the first fruits of your harvest, to the priest" (Lev. xxiii. 10).

While no definite amount is specified under the New Law, simple justice requires that we should provide for our pastor, for he works for us and

prays for us. He offers the holy sacrifice of the Mass for us, he administers the sacraments to us, he consoles us in our trouble, he visits us when we are sick, and he closes our eyes after we are dead. Surely "the laborer is worthy of his hire" (Luke x. 7), and our blessed Lord has said: "They that preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel" (1 Cor. ix. 4).

The Sixth Commandment of the Church.

Not to marry persons who are not Catholics, or who are related to us within the fourth degree of kindred, nor privately without witnesses, nor to solemnize marriage at forbidden times.

The Fourth Degree of Kindred.

The meaning of the commandment not to marry within the fourth degree of kindred is that no one is allowed to marry another within the fourth degree of blood relationship.

Therefore all who are third cousins (who are in the fourth degree of kindred) or in nearer relationship cannot be married without a dispensation from the Church allowing them to do so. God's law does not forbid first, second, or third cousins to get married, but the Church's law forbids it, and thus it can in special cases dispense from such laws.

Marrying Privately.

The command not to marry privately means that none should marry without the blessing of God's priests or without witnesses.

If persons wishing to be married suspect that there is any impediment existing between them, they should express their doubts and the reasons for them to the priest.

If any Catholic goes to be married before a Protestant minister, he is, by the laws of the Church in the United States, excommunicated. One who dies wilfully excommunicated dies in mortal sin, and no Mass or funeral prayers can be publicly offered for him, nor can he be buried in consecrated ground.

Forbidden Times.

The festivals which commemorate the mysteries of our redemption ought to be kept in a spirit of recollection, and it stands to reason, therefore, that during the holy seasons of the year all noisy amusements ought to be avoided. First among these are weddings, on which at other times even conscientious Christians may indulge in extraordinary demonstrations of joy. The principal holy seasons of the year are Advent and Lent. During these times the celebration of marriages and of birthday feasts

was entirely forbidden in the early Church. Later on there were added three weeks as a preparation for the birth of St. John the Baptist (in imitation of the four weeks before the nativity of Our Lord), in place of which some countries kept the Rogation week, St. Mark's day, and the period from Pentecost to Corpus Christi. In later years it was permitted to celebrate marriages quietly during these seasons. At last the Roman Church, the faithful guardian of unity, insisted on uniformity in this matter.

According to the present practice of the Church, the seasons in which it is not allowed to solemnize marriages are from the first Sunday in Advent to the Epiphany, and from Ash Wednesday to Low Sunday.

During these seasons marriages may only be contracted with the special permission of the Bishop. But even where an express permission is not necessary, marriages must be celebrated quietly at least; no solemn Mass may be sung, nor may the priest give the blessing which is generally pronounced over the bride and bridegroom after the *Pater Noster* and *Ite Missa est*. All worldly rejoicings must be avoided, and dancing especially is forbidden.

From what we have said above, it will be seen that the custom, unfortunately prevalent in many places, of having dances on New Year's Eve or

New Year's Day, or of giving balls in Lent or going to them, is an unjustifiable abuse, which causes the giver of these feasts as well as his guests to commit grievous sin, so that a priest only does his duty in raising his voice against it.

Transgression of the Commandments.

Sin in General.

As the will of God is expressed in the commandments, everybody who transgresses a commandment acts contrary to the will of God; he therefore commits sin, and is worthy of punishment in the sight of God. "He that keepeth the commandments, keepeth his own soul: but he that neglecteth his own way, shall die" (Prov. xix. 16).

If we do anything which God has forbidden, we sin by deed; if we omit to do anything which God has commanded, we sin by omission. But we can also sin by thought and desire; for instance, by wishing to do anything forbidden if we could do it, and by being resolved to do it if we had the opportunity. We can also sin by words. "No thought escapeth him, and no word can hide itself from him" (Ecclus. xlii. 20). "Let no evil speech proceed from your mouth" (Eph. iv. 29).

1. For committing a sin, it is necessary knowingly and deliberately to do or omit something. We must know the commandment or prohibition, and do the sin of our own free will. If we do not know that a thing is commanded or prohibited, we

commit no sin in doing or omitting it, for in this case knowledge is wanting. In the same way if we do anything sinful without intending to do it, either by not being quite conscious of the action or by having no free choice, there is no consent of the will. It is not the action but the intention which constitutes sin. Where there is no consent of the will, there is no sin.

2. Therefore those persons do not sin who transgress a commandment from ignorance or error, unconsciously or without consent of the will. Ignorance and error, however, are only an excuse if they are invincible, *i.e.*, if they exist in a person's mind without that person's fault.

Thus, for instance, a person who eats flesh-meat on an abstinence day because he does not know it is an abstinence day is only excused from sin if it was impossible for him to know it. But he is not excused if he has taken no pains to find out which are the abstinence and fast-days observed in the diocese where he is staying. For if we can procure information, but do not use sufficient diligence to obtain it, we are not free from blame.

We should likewise sin if we thought a thing not lawful and did it all the same, or if we thought something was of obligation and omitted to do it, whether our judgment in the matter was right or not, for we should have the intention of breaking the commandment.

3. In the same way, as only those doubts against faith are sins which are voluntary, only those thoughts and desires are criminal which we incite in ourselves of our own free will or in which we voluntarily take pleasure. Involuntary thoughts which frequently assail a man, and under which he often suffers very much, and the concupiscence of our poor human nature, that tinder for the spark of sin, which remains in us even after original sin has been obliterated, are not sinful, but they may become so if they are not repressed and are allowed to get the better of us.

4. All sins are not equally great. Their guilt depends both on the importance of the law and the greatness of the virtue which they violate. It also depends on the degree of malice from which they proceed, and the consequences which can be foreseen to arise from them, on the condition, the qualities, and the duties of the person who commits the sin, on the circumstances under which it is committed, etc. A sin of injustice committed by a rich man is more grievous than the sin of a poor man, who, driven by distress, appropriates strange goods. A person whose duty it is to watch over the observance of the laws sins more grievously than another by breaking them. He who in cold blood lies in wait for a fellow-man in order to kill him, commits an incomparably more grievous sin than he who is carried away by anger to commit a similar deed.

Holy Scripture itself distinguishes between graver and lighter sins.

The sin of the callous Jews was greater than the sin of Sodom (Lam. iv. 6). The sin of the high-priests who delivered Our Lord to the heathen judge was greater than the sin of that judge himself, for our blessed Lord said to Pilate: "Thou shouldst not have any power against Me, unless it were given thee from above. Therefore he that delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin" (St. John xix. 11). "Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye" (St. Matt. vii. 3).

5. A transgression done with full knowledge and consent in a matter of importance is a sin leading to spiritual death, or a mortal sin. But full consent does not necessarily mean that degree of malice which commits sin because it is sin, but it means that we know the sin which we are about to commit to be sin, or that through our own fault we are ignorant of its being such (culpable ignorance). Mortal sin deprives man of sanctifying grace, robs him of all the merit of the good works he has done, and makes it impossible for him to gain new merit with God. It weakens his natural disposition for good and makes the sinner the slave of Satan. "He that committeth sin is of the devil" (1 St. John iii. 8).

The essence of mortal sin consists in contempt of God, because man opposes his will to the will of

God, gives preference to creatures, and severs the bond of charity which unites him with God. The sinner does all this in spite of the infinite graces of creation, redemption, and sanctification which he has received from the Blessed Trinity. When man ceases to be in communion with God, he has no longer a share in life. His soul is given over to death and eternal damnation. "But he that shall sin against Me shall hurt his own soul. All that hate Me love death" (Prov. viii. 36).

6. As sin separates us from God, it is the greatest evil, nay, we may say, sin is the only evil. Labor and toil, suffering and sorrow not only cannot deprive us of the grace of God, but, if borne patiently, they increase it in our soul. "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38, 39).

As mortal sin deprives us of the Supreme and Eternal Good for time and eternity, therefore a Christian ought to lose all worldly possessions and suffer every kind of adversity rather than commit a mortal sin.

7. A transgression committed in a matter of little importance, or without full knowledge, or without full consent of the will, is a venial sin. It

differs from mortal sin both in its character and in its consequences. It is no turning away from God, no entire disregard of God, and therefore it does not destroy charity. It does not totally deprive the soul of sanctifying grace, and does not draw down eternal damnation on the sinner. Man can atone for it by his own meritorious works; venial sin can be remitted without confession. It is possible even for the just to commit it through human frailty.

Nevertheless we must not be imprudent, but beware most carefully even of venial sin. For although it does not entirely estrange us from God, it is always a stain on the soul and weakens charity in us. It feeds concupiscence in our heart and paves the way for mortal sin. And as God is obliged by His justice to punish the smallest offence, even the soul attainted by venial sin incurs His punishment, and must expiate its fault in this life by all kinds of temporal penalties, and after death by the pains of purgatory. Moreover, venial sin deprives man of many graces by which he might have gained new merit.

8. In most cases we can recognize whether a sin is a mortal or a venial one, but it is not always possible. However, we shall generally find reliable judgements in our own discernment, in the knowledge we have gained by instruction and by our Christian training, in the judgments of others, in

our own intention and our own conscience. But wherever there is a doubt in the matter, a Christian is bound, for the sake of the future which awaits him, to seek advice from his confessor in the tribunal of Penance, as in matters of salvation there must be no indifference.

Application.

1. In order to understand the gravity of mortal sin, we need only consider who is the Person offended and who the person offending. The Creator is offended, and the offender—a creature! a miserable creature, entirely in the hands of Him whom he dares to offend! Who would be so foolish as to draw down upon himself the anger of one from whom he cannot escape?

2. How mean is that for love of which we offend God! A temporal possession, a momentary pleasure, the gratification of a passion which only robs us of our peace, are the price for which we barter our greatest treasure. Our Lord may well complain of many of us, as He did of the Israelites in the days of old: "They violate Me for a piece of bread" (Ex. xiii. 19).

But even if we were to gain the most valuable possessions, the greatest riches in the exchange: "What is a man advantaged if he gain the whole world, and lose himself and cast away himself?" (St. Luke ix. 25).

Examples.

The rebel angels sinned only once, according to theologians, and what a dreadful punishment overtook them! God "delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto torments, to be reserved unto judgment" (2 St. Peter ii. 4). For the sin of our first parents not only they, but all their descendants were punished. In the time of Noe all mankind with the exception of eight persons were destroyed (Gen. vii. 21). The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha perished, Lot and his family alone excepted (Gen. xix. 24). The Israelites who murmured against God had to die in the desert, and only two men, Josue and Caleb, reached the Land of Promise (Num. xiv. 30). After the taking of Jericho, all the idolatrous inhabitants were put to death, and only Rahab, who had hidden the spies, was spared (Jos. vi. 23). The Jewish people were led into captivity for their wickedness. Holy Scripture relates how the kings of Juda and Israel were punished for their sins; for instance, Saul, David, Solomon, Roboam, Jeroboam, Josaphat, Joram, Ozias, Achaz, Manasses, Amon, Joachim, Zedechias, as we read in the Book of Paralipomenon. But the best way of gaining an idea of the enormity of mortal sin is by considering that neither man nor angel could take away sin from the human race or atone for it.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Himself had to leave the throne of His glory to become man, to suffer and to die in order to regain the grace we had lost.

But not only grievous sins, but also such as appear trifling in our eyes, were severely punished: Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land because he doubted whether enough water would come out of the rock to quench the thirst of the multitude (Num. xx. 10). When the Ark was taken out of the house of Abinadab, Oza thought it was falling, for the oxen kicked and made it lean aside. He put forth his hand and took hold of it. "And the indignation of the Lord was enkindled against Oza, and He struck him for his rashness; and he died there before the Ark of God" (2 Kings vi. 7). David in a fit of vanity ordered a numbering of all his people. But the Lord sent a pestilence over Israel, and there died of the people seventy thousand men (2 Kings xxiv. 15).

The Different Kinds of Sin.

Man estranged from God is in a sinful state, which produces individual sins. These vary according to the outward form in which this state reveals itself, and from the different directions in which it acts they are classed under three headings: Lust of the eyes or love of riches, lust of the flesh or love of pleasure, pride of life or love of honors.

Besides these we speak of:

(1) Seven capital sins, (2) six sins against the Holy Ghost, (3) four sins crying to Heaven for vengeance, (4) nine ways of sharing another's sin.

CAPITAL SINS.

The capital sins are so called because all other sins spring from them, as from so many sources.

They proceed from the three above-named sins of lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh, pride of life, wherefore these latter might be called radical sins. Their relation to each other is as follows:

From the lust of the eyes spring: covetousness and envy;

From the lust of the flesh: gluttony and impurity;

From the pride of life: anger and pride;

From all three radical sins: sloth.

These capital sins are not necessarily mortal sins. We may be guilty of them even in small things, or we may commit them without full consent of the will. But they easily become mortal sins if once evil desire has taken root in our soul, and if we give ourselves up to them easily and willingly, and so fall from lighter into graver transgressions.

1. Pride is an inordinate and exaggerated esteem of ourself and of our own qualities. The

proud man forgets that all the good he possesses is a blessing and a gift from God. He attributes all his success to his own talents, his own knowledge, his own doing. He raises himself above others, overestimates his good qualities and overlooks his own defects and faults. Vanity, vainglory, ambition, self-praise, hypocrisy, stubbornness, quarrelsomeness, and, not infrequently, deeds of violence are the deplorable consequences of pride.

Thus we see Lucifer standing up, and, proud of the eminent natural gifts with which God Himself had endowed him, refusing obedience to his Creator. "I will ascend into heaven. . . . I will be like the Most High" (Is. xiv. 13). But God precipitated him into the abyss. Pharaoh said to Moses: "Who is the Lord that I should hear His voice and let Israel go? I know not the Lord." But the Lord caused him and all his army to be swallowed up by the waters of the sea (Ex. v. 2; xiv. 28). "Pride is the beginning of all sin" (Eccles. x. 15).

2. Covetousness or avarice is an inordinate and exaggerated attachment to the goods of this world. The covetous tries to grasp whatever he can get hold of, and is niggardly towards himself and others; he is in constant dread of losing his possessions. He shrinks from no injustice, provided he can increase his riches, and he becomes an impostor and a thief. Hardness of heart, injustice,

lying, perjury, treason, and violence, are the consequences of avarice. Avarice led Judas to betray his Master; his end was despair and death by his own hand (Acts i. 18). The same sin caused Ananias and Saphira to lie to the Holy Ghost; both were punished by sudden death (Acts v.). "Let your manners be without covetousness, contented with such things as you have" (Heb. xiii. 5).

3. Envy is a repining at the prosperity of our neighbor even so as to cause anger and sadness in us. The envious is grieved when things go well with his neighbor, and glad when he is in adversity. Hatred, calumny, intrigue, cruelty, and injustice of all kinds are the fruits of this ugly sin.

It was out of envy that Cain killed Abel, and he was cursed by God for it (Gen. iv.). Saul was envious because the women of Israel sang: "Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Kings xviii. 7). He fell into melancholy, and God withdrew His grace from him, and in the end he killed himself by falling on his sword (1 Kings xxxi. 4). Out of envy the high-priests and Pharisees persecuted Our Lord and sought His life, and thus drew down a curse on Jerusalem.

4. Gluttony or intemperance is excess in food and drink. A glutton is a man who eats and drinks too much, or greedily, exceeds the lawful measure, eats and drinks out of time, or too costly

and too dainty viands, or indulges in unnecessary delicacies, although he has not the means to pay for them and has to go into debt to procure them, or spends money on them with which he ought to buy the necessities of life. Gluttony generally leads to drink, and from both together proceed dissipation, impurity, anger, strife, loss of fortune, bad bringing up of children, ruin of health, dulness of mind, and early and, not infrequently, sudden death. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is luxury" (Eph. v. 18).

The head of Holofernes was cut off while he was lying on his bed drunk (Judith xiii. 10). King Baltassar lost his kingdom while he was intoxicated (Dan. v. 30). The rich man who feasted sumptuously was thrust into hell (St. Luke xvi.).

5. Anger is an inordinate and unbridled displeasure at real or imaginary wrongs done to us. It generally springs from wounded vanity, and from the idea that our efforts or our just claims are underrated by others. An angry man cannot brook contradiction, he seeks immediate revenge for injuries done to him, returning abuse for abuse, or having recourse to violence. Revenge, hatred, strife, violence, homicide, even suicide itself spring from this fatal passion.

When Esau thought he had been defrauded by Jacob, he wept with a loud cry and said: "The days will come of the mourning of my father, and

I will kill my brother Jacob" (Gen. xxvii. 41). King Achab was so angry at the refusal of Naboth to give up his vineyard, that he went home, and casting himself on his bed, he turned away his face to the wall, and would eat no bread. And his anger was only appeased when Naboth had been stoned (though undeservedly) and he had obtained the vineyard (3 Kings xxi.). The Jews were so angry at the words of St. Stephen that they were cut to the heart and gnashed their teeth at him. And crying out with a loud voice, they stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him. And casting him forth without the city, they stoned him (Acts vii.).

6. Sloth is a voluntary disinclination for and neglect of the duties which the Christian religion in general, and our state in life in particular, impose upon us. Not only the scholar is slothful who learns nothing, or the sluggard who shuns work, but all those who from indolence do not faithfully fulfil the duties of their office; not only the Christian who feels a disinclination for prayer and going to church at the proper times, but also all those who are indifferent in matters of faith. This spiritual sloth is called tepidity. Distaste for work, neglect of duty, deceit, contempt of God, ill-humor, and spiritual and temporal degradation are the consequences of sloth.

The five foolish virgins who had no oil when the

bridegroom arrived were excluded from the marriage. The bridegroom said: "I know you not" (St. Matt. xxv. 12). The servant who had hidden his talent in the earth was cast out into the exterior darkness as an unprofitable, wicked, and lazy servant (St. Matt. xxv. 30). God sent the following message to the Bishop of Laodicea through St. John: "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot, but because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth" (Apoc. iii. 15, 16).

THE SINS AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST

are so called, because they resist, set at nought, and act in direct opposition to the goodness and grace of God, which are specially attributed to the Holy Ghost. They are also called extreme sins, because they spring from an evil intention deliberately persisted in, and are, as it were, the extreme of human malice.

As these sins close the soul against the ordinary influence of grace by the Holy Spirit, in such a manner that no contrition, no repentance can find their way into it, he who persists in this sin cannot hope for pardon. Therefore the Lord says: "Who-soever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be for-

given him, neither in this world nor in the world to come" (St. Matt. xii. 32).

The sins against the Holy Ghost are the following six:

1. Presuming on God's mercy. Of this sin all persons are guilty who put off their conversion to the time of their old age, and persuade themselves that they will have plenty of leisure for repentance when they shall be on a sickbed; also those who say to themselves: I shall have to confess this sin anyhow, what does it matter whether I commit it a few times more or less? All these sin against the Holy Ghost.

King Manasses had led a godless life, and the Lord sent him into captivity by the hands of the king of the Assyrians. When a captive he did penance before God, and the Lord allowed him to go back to Jerusalem. His son Amon was as wicked as Manasses had been in his youth. He determined to imitate all the vices of his father, and like him to convert himself in his old age. But he deceived himself; he only reigned two years, and was slain by his own servants (2 Par. xxxiii.).

2. Despair. Cain despaired when he had killed his brother Abel. He said to God: "My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon." Remorse left him no peace, and he wandered about the earth a vagabond and a fugitive (Gen. iv. 13).

When Judas saw that the enemies of Our Lord caused Him to be condemned to death, he repented of his treason. He took back the thirty pieces of silver to the high-priests, and said: "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." And when he found that he could not repair his fatal deed, he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple and hanged himself with a halter (St. Matt. xxvii. 4, 5).

3. Resisting the known Christian truth. This sin is chiefly committed by those who believe that salvation is found in the Catholic Church, but are kept back by human respect from entering it, or who, when God has given them the grace of being born in the Catholic Church, fall away from it for the sake of worldly gain.

The Scribes knew the place and the time of the coming of Our Redeemer, and yet none of them went to Bethlehem with the Magi. And when Our Lord appeared in public and wrought miracles before their eyes, they would not believe, and delivered Him up to death. When St. Peter had healed the lame man by the Temple gate, they confessed that a miracle had been wrought, yet, nevertheless, they forbade the apostles to teach. Therefore St. Stephen reproached them in these words: "You resist the Holy Ghost" (Acts vii. 51).

4. Envy of another's spiritual good. This was the sin of Lucifer, who, himself an eternal exile from the joys of heaven, saw man in Paradise in

his state of bliss and strove to make him wretched like himself. "By the envy of the devil, death came into the world" (Wisd. ii. 24).

5. Obstinacy in sin. The people at the time of the deluge were guilty of this sin, when they would not listen to Noe, who preached penance while he was building the ark; Pharaoh likewise, who hardened his heart and would not let the Israelites depart, although he saw the misery which came over Egypt. But this sin is also committed by all those persons who will not listen to the well-meant warnings of parents, masters, priests, and confessors, when they exhort them to desist from sin. "The man that with a stiff neck despiseth him that proveth him, shall suddenly be destroyed; and health shall not follow him" (Prov. xxix. 1).

6. Final impenitence. The inhabitants of Jerusalem committed this sin; they were more wicked than all the other cities. Ezechiel complains of them in the following words: "Jerusalem hath despised my judgments, so as to be more wicked than the Gentiles; and my commandments more than the countries that are round about her" (Ezech. v. 6). And yet God had called them to penance, had sent prophets to them, and the Son of God had come Himself to gather His children as a hen gathers the chickens under her wings. But Jerusalem would not be converted. She killed the prophets and stoned them that were sent to her

"For this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth."—St. John xviii. 37.



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"Then Susanna cried out: O eternal God, Thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me."—Dan. xiii. 42, 43.

EIGHTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

**"Thou shalt not bear false witness
against thy neighbor."**

REFLECTION.—Although the tongue is but a small member of our body, it is, nevertheless, the most difficult to govern. The greatest number of sins are committed with the tongue; hence St. James says (iii. 2.): "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man." A sinful tongue often works irreparable injury. We shall have to give to God a rigorous account not only of every sinful word, but even of every idle word we speak. What a terrible account, then, must not be given by those who never scruple to tell lies, who hardly ever open their mouth except to backbite, belittle, and slander their neighbor!

PRACTICE.—Let us never tell a lie, however trivial it may appear, however great the good we may expect to derive from it, for every lie is an offence against the God of truth. Let us never indulge or allow others to indulge in our presence in backbiting and slandering our neighbor. Let us always speak of others as we would wish them to speak of us.

PRAYER.—O my God, give me the grace always to govern my tongue, so that I may never utter a lie or any word that may wound charity. O Mary, help me always to practise charity towards my neighbor in thought, word, and deed. Amen.

(St. Matt. xxiii. 37), and nailed the Saviour to the cross. Therefore Jerusalem met with a more dreadful doom than any other nation. But all those, moreover, are guilty of the same sin who reject the grace and mercy of God, refuse to repair the injury they have done to their neighbor in his honor or his property, and who will not be reconciled to their enemies.

To those who sin against the Holy Ghost by closing their hearts against contrition and penance, the Lord addresses these words: "According to thy hardness and impenitent heart, thou treasurest up to thyself wrath, against the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God" (Rom. ii. 5).

THE SINS CRYING TO HEAVEN FOR VENGEANCE.

Certain sins are so called because their malice cries to Heaven and provokes the Divine Justice to punish them. They are four in number:

1. Wilful murder. When Cain had killed his brother Abel, God declared the enormity of his sin by saying: "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth to Me from the earth" (Gen. iv. 10).

2. The sin of Sodom, a sin of impurity, for which the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha were destroyed by fire and brimstone in the most awful manner. Of Sodom the angel said: "Their

cry is grown loud before the Lord, who hath sent us to destroy them" (Gen. xix. 13).

3. Oppression of the poor, of widows and orphans. Of this sin the authorities are guilty when they do not help the poor to obtain their right; guardians also who badly administrate the property of those under their charge, or spend it for their own profit. How beautifully says Jesus Sirach: "Do not the widow's tears run down the cheek, and is not her cry against him that causeth them to fall? For from the cheek they go up even to heaven" (Ecclus. xxxv. 18, 19). Holy Job could say of himself: "If I have denied to the poor what they desired, and have made the eyes of the widow wait: if I have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof: if I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, let my shoulder fall from its joint, and let my arm with its bones be broken" (Job xxxi. 16, 17, 21, 22).

4. Defrauding laborers of their wages. Holy Scripture teaches us: "The wages of him that hath been hired by thee shall not abide with thee till morning" (Lev. xix. 13). "He that sheddeth blood, and he that defraudeth the laborer of his hire, are brothers" (Ecclus. xxxiv. 27). "Behold the hire of the laborers, who have reaped down your fields, which by fraud hath been kept back by you, crieth, and the cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (St. James v. 4).

THE SINS OF OTHERS.

If we are the occasion of another's sin, or if we promote sin in any way, or if we destroy hatred of sin in others by the inculcation of bad principles, although we have not actually committed the sins of these persons, we bear the full guilt and responsibility of them. Such sins are called the sins of others. These sins are all the more dangerous, as we may not even be conscious of having committed them. So, for instance, a person who has led a human soul into sin does not know the harm which he has done to that soul, and which sin, nevertheless, rests on his conscience with its full weight. Therefore David prayed: "From my secret sins cleanse me, O Lord: and from those of others spare thy servant" (Ps. xviii. 13, 14).

There are nine ways in which we may share the sins of others:

1. By counsel.

2. By command. Those guilty of these sins are the seducers and scandal-givers of whom we have already spoken. Rebecca sinned in this way by directing Jacob to deceive his father Isaac and to pass himself off for Esau (Gen. xvii.). Parents also do the same who bid their children lie or steal, masters who make their servants work on Sundays, those who incite children to disobedience to their parents, and those who stir up servants

against their masters and subjects against their rulers. "He that deceiveth the just in a wicked way shall fall in his own destruction" (Prov. xxviii. 10).

3. By consent. Saul sinned by consent when he guarded the garments of those who were stoning Stephen. Of him the Acts say expressly: "Paul was consenting to his death" (Acts vii. 59). All those sin in like manner who allow themselves to be seduced by flatteries and caresses, or by any kind of gain held out to them, or who are bribed by presents. "Accept no person to sin thereby" (Ecclus. xlii. 1).

4. By provocation. Satan was the first who was guilty of this sin by tempting our first parents, and Eve was the next when she gave of the forbidden fruit to Adam (Gen. iii.). Herodias provoked Herod to sin by asking for the head of St. John the Baptist (St. Matt. xiv. 8). The Jews provoked Pilate by crying out to him: "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend" (St. John xix. 12).

Those, moreover, commit the same sin who excite the passions of others, for instance, by irritating them, and thus causing outbursts of anger, which again lead to other sins, or by using angry words (curses, etc.), or singing sinful songs, or committing sinful actions in their presence, and thus giving a bad example which will be imitated. Those also are guilty of it who paint, exhibit, show, or

propagate indecent pictures, and those who give scandal by bold behavior or immodest dress. "My son, if sinners shall entice thee, consent not to them" (Prov. i. 10).

5. By praise or flattery. The Jews applauded Herod for having put to death St. James the Apostle, and thereby encouraged him to further crimes, so that he sent St. Peter to prison, in order to cause him to be executed after the Pasch. Of such sinners St. Paul says: "They do not understand that they, who do such things, are worthy of death: and not only they that do them, but they also that consent to them that do them" (Rom. i. 32).

6. By silence. The gravity of this sin can be understood from the words which God spoke to the Prophet Ezechiel. He commissioned him to invite the wicked to be converted from their ways, that they might not perish. Then He adds this warning: "If thou dost not speak to warn the wicked man from his way: the wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand" (Ezech. xxxiii. 8).

7. By connivance. Heli is an example of this, for he did not punish his sons Ophni and Phinees, although he heard the complaints of the people who came to sacrifice before the Ark, that the two young men seized by force the flesh offered for sacrifice and kept it for themselves. For this sin

he was punished together with his sons. Ophni and Phinees perished in battle, and when their father heard the news, he fell from his stool and broke his neck (1 Kings iv.). Parents also commit this sin who do not chastise their children when they will not listen to admonition. Further, persons in authority who are either too lenient, or who from human respect or partiality do not punish disorders as they are bound to do. "They that rebuke the wicked shall be praised, and a blessing shall come upon them" (Prov. xxiv. 25).

8. By being partner in the sin. This sin was committed by Judas, who, though only showing the way to the soldiers, was guilty of the full crime as well as the members of the Council, and perished miserably. Moreover, all those persons are guilty of it who help in any sinful undertaking, and those no less who in any way facilitate its execution. To their number belong all those who spy out opportunities for thieves or criminals, conceal or sell goods for them, who hide criminals or procure means and tools for them, and above all, those persons who arrange illicit meetings, allow them in their houses, etc. "He that is partaker with a thief, hateth his own soul" (Prov. xxix. 24).

9. To defend the ill done. This is done sometimes by people who do not even mean any great harm. When a man has played a nasty trick on

another and has succeeded in it, we hear them say: "He has done well, I would have done the same." But Holy Scripture says: "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, both are abominable before God" (Prov. xvii. 15).

Application.

As sin is the greatest of all evils, we must have nothing more at heart than to avoid it. We must therefore:

1. Be watchful above all things, in order that we may not be taken unawares by sin. Our Saviour exhorts His apostles: "Watch ye, and pray that you enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh weak" (St. Matt. xxvi. 41).

2. The best way to avoid sin is to keep from bad occasions. "He that loveth danger shall perish in it" (Ecclus. iii. 27).

3. Our Lord not only admonished the apostles to watch, but to watch and pray. And the fifth petition of the Our Father is: "Lead us not into temptation." Prayer is the strongest weapon against all the assaults of the Evil One.

4. Excite daily in your heart a horror of sin, of sin which plunges into misery every one who becomes its slave. "Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent" (Ecclus. xxi. 2).

Christian Virtue.

Character of Virtue.—Different Kinds of Virtue.

THE more faithfully a man abstains from sin and represses evil in himself, the nearer he approaches to a state of proficiency in doing good and willingness to do it. This state is called virtue. Virtue is therefore not a single act, nor a series of separate acts, but the continued effort of avoiding evil and doing good.

We distinguish infused and acquired virtue. Infused virtue is the faculty of co-operating with the grace of God, *i.e.*, an attraction and disposition for the practice of supernatural virtues. Such infused virtues are Faith, Hope, and Charity, which the Holy Ghost communicates to our soul in Baptism. Acquired virtue is a proficiency in doing good obtained by our own endeavors assisted by the grace of God, a proficiency which we gain through the often-repeated exercise of good actions.

From the fact that we receive this infused virtue from God, it follows that it is our duty to strive after actual virtue and to acquire it.

“We are created in Christ Jesus in good works, which God hath prepared that we should walk in them” (Eph. ii. 10).

The Theological Virtues.

According to the object towards which they tend, virtues are divided into theological and moral virtues. The theological virtues are Faith, Hope, and Charity. They are called theological, because they have God (*Theos*) for their motive as well as for their object.

The Christian is bound from time to time to elicit acts of these virtues in himself. We are not expressly told how often we must make acts of faith, hope, and charity; but it is certain that we ought to do so in grievous temptations, in danger of death, and, above all, at our last hour. All prayer-books contain directions on this subject, and every Christian who has come to the use of reason and is instructed in his religion is taught how to make these acts. We elicit an act of faith when we make the sign of the cross, when we take holy water, assist at Mass or hear sermons, say our prayers, etc. We make an act of charity when we confess our sins and are sorry for them because they displease God; when we are grieved because God is offended by others. As often as we ask God's pardon and beg Him heartily for anything,

we elicit an act of hope. But it is necessary also from time to time to make explicit acts of the three theological virtues, because God desires a reasonable worship from us, and because our reason is to have a part in the pursuit of the goal we strive for.

The theological virtues of Faith and Hope cease for the blessed after death. Faith changes into vision, and Hope becomes possession. But Charity abides and unites our souls most intimately with God, our fellow-saints, and the holy angels. "We see now through a glass in a dark manner: but then face to face. And now there remain faith, hope, charity, these three" (1 Cor. xiii. 12, 13). "Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void, or tongues shall cease, or knowledge shall be destroyed" (*Ibid.* viii.).

The holy souls in purgatory believe, hope, and love, and all the more because in a certain sense they have a glimpse of the Eternal Happiness beyond, for heaven is certain to them.

The devils have lost Faith, Hope, and Charity. It is true the Apostle says: "The devils also believe and tremble" (St. James ii. 19).

But their faith is not faith resting on revelation, but an awful certainty produced by the weight of Divine Justice pressing on them.

The Moral Virtues.

All other virtues besides the theological virtues are called moral virtues, because they regulate our moral conduct. Although they do not have God for their immediate object, they aim at acquiring the means of attaining to God.

THE CARDINAL VIRTUES.

Four of the moral virtues are called principal or cardinal virtues, because they are the hinges (*cardines*) on which all other virtues turn. The moral life of man is based on these four virtues, and man is only moral so far as he possesses them.

The cardinal virtues are:

1. Prudence, or the faculty of not only willing good, but also of using the right means for attaining it. It is not sufficient to have the will of doing good, we must also know how we can practise it, so that good may not be changed into evil. Prudence regulates all other virtues. Without prudence liberality changes into extravagance, benevolence connives at idleness and laziness, indulgence and charity encourage malice, economy becomes avarice. Piety without prudence often gives scandal. Therefore St. Bernard says: "Take away prudence, and virtue becomes vice." "To think upon her [wisdom] is perfect understanding: and

he that watcheth for her, shall quickly be secure" (Wisd. vi. 16).

There is also a worldly prudence, which, however, has nothing in common with Christian prudence, for it does not aim at justice. It is the prudence of the serpent without the guileless simplicity of the dove. The children of this world possess it, but not the children of light. "The learning of wickedness is not wisdom; and the device of sinners is not prudence. There is an exquisite subtilty, and the same is unjust" (Ecclus. xix. 19, 22).

King Ezechias is an example of true prudence. Holy Scripture relates of him: "He trusted in the Lord the God of Israel: so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Juda, nor any of them that were before him. Wherefore the Lord also was with him, and in all things to which he went forth, he behaved himself wisely" (4 Kings xviii. 5, 7).

2. Justice in a restricted sense. While justice in its wider sense is the compendium of all virtues, the cardinal virtue of justice is that virtue which inclines us to give to every man his due, whether his claims be based on strict right or on fairness only. "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things that are God's" (St. Matt. xxii. 21).

Thus the just man gives to God due adoration, reverence, obedience, love, and gratitude; to the

secular authorities he pays honor, obedience, and the taxes they exact; to his parents he renders honor, obedience, gratitude, and practical assistance; to his fellow-men he shows civility, kindness, love, and mercy, and he always pays what he owes. If he does not know how much he owes, he rather pays too much than too little.

The just priest gives to his flock a good example, assiduous instruction, and dispenses the sacraments with diligence.

Just parents give to their children not only food, clothing, bodily care, but also a religious education.

Just rulers do not burden their subjects with unbearable taxes and do not punish without need.

In short, every just man faithfully fulfils the duties of his state.

3. Temperance is the continued effort of conquering sensual appetites and desires, so that they may not lead us into sin. Temperance is chiefly directed towards the mastery of our appetite for food and drink and of the pleasures of the flesh, for these are the instincts which are most apt to lead us into sin. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17).

But temperance is not only practised by moderation in food and drink, but also by the restraint of all our passions, especially of anger, avarice, garrulity, etc. The Psalmist says very wisely: "If

sins shall have no dominion over me, then shall I be without spot: and I shall be cleansed from the greatest sin. And the words of my mouth shall be such as may please: and the meditation of my heart always in thy sight" (Ps. xviii. 14, 15).

4. Fortitude, which is daunted by neither hardship nor persecution in the pursuit of good. The frailty of our human nature makes us shrink from anything which hurts us or causes us annoyance. But if we consider well that the practice of good prepares for us an immense reward in heaven, while omission of it leads us to hell, we shall be encouraged to bear willingly all hardships and persecutions, as all the disciples of Christ have done before us. "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. iii. 12).

We find the most eminent examples of fortitude in the holy martyrs, who confessed the holy name of Jesus on the rack and on the wheel, and testified to their faith even under the axe of the executioner.

But we can evince fortitude without being martyrs. The poor man who struggles with want all the days of his life, the sick who suffer patiently on their bed of pain, the servant who bears the caprices of his masters with meekness and without a murmur—these and many other unbloody martyrs excel in fortitude. Their strength is in God; they say with David and with the Prophet Isaias: "The

Lord is my strength and my praise: and He is become my salvation" (Ps. cxvii. 14; Is. xii. 2).

THE PRINCIPAL VIRTUES.

To the seven capital sins as many virtues are opposed; they are:

1. Humility, which is conscious of its own nothingness before God and acknowledges that all the good it possesses does not proceed from its own strength, but from God alone.

Our Lord Himself is the example of humility; He said: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (St. Matt. xi. 29). Mary, the ever-blessed Mother of God, is not proud of being chosen for that great dignity, but praises the Lord, who has regarded her lowliness, and calls herself the handmaid of the Lord (St. Luke i. 38, 48). Humility shows itself chiefly in this, that humble persons are diffident of themselves; that they think themselves unworthy of the benefits of God; that they do not ask for honor or praise; that they willingly perform lowly services, etc.

It is not opposed to humility that a man respect himself as a Christian and a member of the Church, as long as he recognizes that he owes all he has to the grace of God and not to his own virtue. Thus St. Paul says of himself: "I am the least of the apostles, and am not worthy to be called an apostle.

But by the grace of God, I am what I am" (1 Cor. xv. 9, 10).

2. Liberality, which willingly shares all temporal goods with others, relieves the distress of the needy, and opens its hand in order to shed blessings, as Our Saviour teaches us to do: "Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away" (St. Matt. v. 42).

3. Chastity, of which we have spoken, and of which we shall treat again in the chapter on the Evangelical Counsels.

4. Brotherly Love, which desires all good for another as much as for itself, and grieves over another's pain as over its own. "Rejoice with them that rejoice, weep with them that weep" (Rom. xii. 15).

5. Temperance in eating and drinking is one particular aspect of the cardinal virtue of temperance. A temperate man not only keeps his appetite for food and drink in proper bounds, but he in no way indulges in the pleasures of the palate and does not pamper himself with delicate viands. And although the temperate man does not restrict his food to what is absolutely necessary, like St. John the Baptist, he abstains from all extravagance and luxury in eating and drinking as incompatible with the spirit of Christ.

Among the Israelites who were captive at Babylon there were four young men, Daniel, Ananias, Misael, and Azarias. They were well favored, and

skilful in all wisdom, acute in knowledge, and instructed in science. They were chosen by King Nabuchodonosor to serve in his palace, and were to be instructed in learning and in the tongue of the Chaldeans. "And the king appointed them a daily provision of his own meat, and of the wine of which he drank himself, that being nourished three years, afterwards they might stand before the king. . . . But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not be defiled with the king's table, nor with the wine which he drank: and he requested the master of the eunuchs that he might not be defiled. And God gave to Daniel grace and mercy in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs. And the prince of the eunuchs said to Daniel: I fear my lord the king, who hath appointed you meat and drink: and if he should see your faces leaner than those of the other youths, your equals, you shall endanger my head to the king. And Daniel said to Malasar, whom the prince of the eunuchs had appointed over Daniel, Ananias, Misael, and Azarias: Try, I beseech thee, thy servants for ten days, and let pulse be given us to eat, and water to drink: and look upon our faces, and the faces of the children that eat of the king's meat: and as thou shalt see, deal with thy servants. And when he had heard these words, he tried them for ten days. And after ten days their faces appeared fairer and fatter than all the children that ate of

the king's meat. So Malasar took their portions, and the wine that they should drink, and gave them pulse. And to these children God gave knowledge, and understanding in every book, and wisdom: but to Daniel the understanding also of all visions and dreams" (Dan. i. 3-17). "For in many meats there will be sickness, and greediness will turn to choler" (Ecclus. xxxvii. 33).

6. Meekness, which represses all revenge, wrath, and anger. King David has given us an example of this virtue. When he was obliged to flee from his son Absalom, he met Semei, the son of Gora, who began to curse David and cast stones at him and called him a son of Belial. Then Abisai, the son of Sarvia, said to the king: "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? I will go, and cut off his head. And the king said [to Abisai]: Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bid him curse David" (2 Kings xvi. 9, 10). And Semei was not punished, although he was in David's power.

7. Diligence, which is anxious to promote God's honor, and to do its duty conscientiously. St. Paul exhorts us to practise this virtue when he says: "Be zealous for that which is good in a good thing always" (Gal. iv. 18).

Christian Perfection.

The Duty of Striving After Perfection.

THE practice of what is good and lawful, joined to the avoidance of evil, is called Christian justice. As this is the only way of saving our soul, we may also say: Striving after justice is true wisdom. "A wise heart, and which hath understanding, will abstain from sins, and in the works of justice shall have success" (Ecclus. iii. 32).

1. Higher in dignity than Christian justice is Christian perfection, which is the complete surrender of ourselves to God, the perfect union of the human with the divine will. Like justice, it springs from the love of God, but its rule is not limited to what is commanded or prohibited by God, but it extends over the whole moral life of man. Perfection is therefore a higher degree of moral and divine virtue. Perfection goes beyond duty, and subjects to the will of God those actions also which are left to the free will of man.

2. Although justice is sufficient for gaining salvation, it is the will of God that we strive after perfection. The Lord said to Abraham: "Walk

before Me, and be perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1). And Our Saviour says expressly: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (St. Matt. v. 48).

In any case, aspiring to perfection is a duty for those who have bound themselves by vow to it, as religious do.

3. Our Lord Jesus Christ has not only shown us the way which leads to perfection, but also the manner of walking in it. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (St. Matt. xvi. 24).

Denying one's self means to overcome the desires of corrupt nature, viz., pride, avarice, lust. Carrying one's cross means to love and seek what fallen nature fears and shrinks from—humiliations, privations, and sufferings; and to do this for the love of Jesus Christ crucified. Thus thought and acted the Apostle Paul, who could say of himself: "I count all these things to be but loss, for the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ" (Phil. iii. 8).

THE EVANGELICAL COUNSELS.

Jesus Christ Himself has shown us the way of attaining perfection by giving us the Evangelical Counsels. They are called Counsels because we

are not bound by any commandment to observe them, and Evangelical because their observance has not become a pious practice in latter days, but because Our Lord Himself has recommended them, as the Gospel testifies.

Of these Evangelical Counsels there are three: Voluntary Poverty, Perpetual Chastity, Entire Obedience.

To observe these counsels is the most powerful means of obtaining Christian perfection, for they repress the three forms of concupiscence which are the obstacles to all virtue: avarice by poverty, lust by chastity, pride by obedience. But their observance is moreover the best practice of perfection, because by it we sacrifice ourselves and all we have to God and to His service: our possessions by poverty, our body by chastity, our will by obedience.

Voluntary Poverty.

Voluntary poverty consists in renouncing our property, or at least the right of disposing of it according to our own pleasure, in such a manner as to receive as an alms out of it what we need for our sustenance.

Our Lord said: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me" (St. Matt. xix. 21).

The holy patriarch St. Anthony carried this out to the letter. He possessed a large fortune, and had an only sister to provide for. One day he went to church to assist at a service. Just as he entered, the preacher pronounced the above-quoted words of Our Lord. Struck by their meaning, he went home and divided his whole fortune into two parts. With one-half he provided for his sister; the other he distributed among the poor. He then left his native place and went into the solitude of the desert, where he lived on roots and herbs. He attained to such a degree of sanctity that from far and near disciples flocked to him and embraced his mode of life. He is considered the patriarch of hermits.

Perpetual Chastity.

Perpetual chastity is not only the entire repression of all impure desires, but it is the voluntary and life-long renunciation of marriage, in order to belong to God alone in purity of body and soul.

Our blessed Redeemer has not commanded virginity, but He has counselled it. When once He was teaching His disciples that not only a man who puts away his wife commits adultery, but he also who marries a woman thus put away by her husband, they said: "If the case of a man with his wife be so, it is not expedient to marry." Our Lord replied: "All men take not this word, but

they to whom it is given. There are eunuchs, who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven. He that can take, let him take it" (St. Matt. xix. 12).

The Church has ever esteemed the state of virginity higher than the married state, although Our Lord has raised marriage to the dignity of a Sacrament. St. Paul gave preference to virginity; in one of his Epistles we read: "The unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord: that she may be holy both in body and spirit. But she that is married, thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband" (1 Cor. vii. 34).

The Council of Trent therefore declares: "If any one say that the married state is to be preferred before the state of virginity, and that it is not better and more perfect to live in virginity than to contract marriage, let him be anathema" (Sess. XXIV., Can. x.).

Even in the Old Testament we find eminent men living in celibacy, for instance, Elias and Eliseus; and in the New, St. John the Baptist deserves mention before all others. Our Saviour chose to be born of a virgin Mother, and the disciple whom He loved with a special love was St. John the Virgin.

St. Thekla, the holy protomartyr, was already married to a rich young man of high rank when St.

Paul came to her native town of Iconium. When she was converted she renounced this alliance, and remained steadfast in her resolution, wherefore she was denounced as a Christian and martyred. We venerate a great number of holy virgins, who lived in the earliest ages of the Church, as SS. Petronilla, Anastasia, Cecilia, Catharine, Agnes, Dorothy, Agatha, Crescentia, Barbara, Apollonia, etc. The virgins were the best-beloved children of the Church, who frequently employed them in the instruction of female catechumens, in services connected with the administration of the sacraments to women, in the care of the house of God, or in nursing the sick.

Voluntary Obedience.

Voluntary obedience is the entire renunciation of one's own will and the complete subjection to the will of another, in order to find rest and peace in God through the breaking of one's own self-love and self-will by obedience.

Jesus Christ Himself has given us the example of consummate obedience. He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of His Father who had sent Him (St. John vi. 38). And He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 8). Therefore He has become the model of obedience for us, and by obedience we have to earn eternal salvation.

“And whereas indeed He was the Son of God, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered: and being consummated, He became to all that obey Him the cause of eternal salvation” (Heb. v. 8, 9).

As the Church is the most perfect union with Christ, who has cleansed it by the laver of water in the word of life, that she should be holy and without blemish (Eph. v. 27), there have been at all times perfect souls in the Christian community. A state has even formed itself which undertakes the observance of the Evangelical Counsels as a duty to which it is bound by solemn vows. This state is the religious state. The Church looks upon it as her most beautiful ornament, and encourages all to enter it, if they feel a call for this mode of life, or to strive after the grace of this great vocation.

THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN THE CHURCH.

There exist various Orders in the Church, but the essence of all lies in the three irrevocable vows of voluntary poverty, perpetual chastity, and entire obedience. They only differ in the pious object they propose to themselves, and in the manner of life which their members lead. Generally speaking, they are divided into two kinds: (1) Active Orders, which exercise their charity outside the cloister in the care of souls, in the education of youth,

in nursing the sick, and other practical works of mercy; and (2) Contemplative Orders, which devote themselves chiefly to contemplation, and by prayer and mortification strive after communion with God.

The principal Active Orders are: The Benedictines and their branches: the Cistercians, Premonstratensians, Camaldolites, and Trinitarians; the Franciscans with their branches: the Capuchins and Observantines; the Dominicans; the Jesuits; the Redemptorists; the Lazarites; the Oratorians; the Congregation of the Holy Cross; the Brothers of Charity; the Christian Brothers; and the Brothers of Mary. Among the Orders of women are distinguished the Sisters of Charity, the Sisters of Mercy, the Nuns of the Good Shepherd, the Ursulines, the Notre Dames, the Sisters of St. Joseph, and the Sisters of Providence, and the different kinds of educational Orders. Nearly all religious Rules are also followed by women, who add all sorts of external duties in order to make themselves useful. Among the Contemplative Orders the most eminent are: the Carmelites, the Augustinians, the Servites, the Carthusians, the Trappists, and the Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration, and the Visitation Nuns. Besides these the Church possesses many Orders and Congregations, both of men and women, which by their self-abnegation and their practice of Christian charity have be-

come a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men (1 Cor. iv. 9).

It is evident that the more the members of a Congregation which is engaged in works of charity are separated from intercourse with the world, and the less they are exposed to the danger of being diverted from their vocation, the more salutary their influence will be and the more their work will prosper—so evident that only ignorance or prejudice can dispute the fact. But even the Contemplative Orders, with their retired, poor, and humble life of prayer and mortification, are a great blessing to mankind. It is quite certain that people who stay at home and pray are more useful than those who walk abroad and sin and instigate mischief and disorders of all kinds, as we see thousands do. Besides, it is a man's private affair how he wishes to save his soul, with whom he chooses to live, how he occupies himself, and what dress he wears. In our time, which is so prolific of maniacs, murderers, thieves, impostors, self-murderers, and rakes, these religious houses ought to be regarded as the most venerable homesteads of piety, and their inmates to be honored as the mainstay of human society.

Perfection in the World.

Not only religious persons, but also those of the faithful who do not live in religious congregations, ought to seek after perfection as far as they are

able. The Apostle says: "And he that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still" (Apoc. xxii. 11).

Priests especially are under a certain obligation to practise the Evangelical Counsels, because they have voluntarily bound themselves to perpetual chastity. They also practise poverty in so far as the profession which they have chosen does not allow of certain avocations, by which they could procure worldly gain. Lastly, a priest subjects himself by obedience to the commandments and ordinances of the Church and to his bishop. Thus the priesthood forms as it were a connecting link between secular and religious persons.

THE EIGHT BEATITUDES.

It is beyond doubt that even persons in the world can strive after perfection and attain it, for Our Lord has expressly told us so. He has explained in the Sermon on the Mount who is blessed, *i.e.*, perfect in this life. His instruction is expressed in the eight beatitudes:

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

These are the poor who, although possessing riches, do not attach their heart to them, but make right use of them. They possess their wealth as if they possessed it not (1 Cor. vii. 30). Those also

are poor in spirit who do not seek riches, but are content with the needful, like St. Paul, who could say of himself: "I have not coveted any man's silver, gold, or apparel: for such things as were needful for me and them that are with me, these hands have furnished" (I have earned by the work of my hands) (Acts xx. 33, 34).

And lastly, the humble are poor in spirit. A holy doctor says: "Poor in spirit is the humble of heart, who has no high opinion of himself; rich in spirit, on the contrary, is the proud man, who is great in his own conceit."

2. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land."

The meek are those who do not allow anger to get the mastery over them, and do not render evil for evil, but rather do good unto their enemies. St. Augustine calls those meek "who overcome evil by good." Not only shall heaven be theirs after death, but even in this life they shall possess the land, *i.e.*, they shall gain the love and favor of God and man, and above all shall enjoy rest and peace in their hearts.

The most beautiful example of meekness is Our Lord Himself. Once He entered one of the cities of the Samaritans with His disciples. The inhabitants did not receive Him, because He was a Jew, and His disciples were so indignant at it that they said: "Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to

come down from heaven and consume them? And turning, He rebuked them, saying: You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls, but to save" (St. Luke ix. 53-56). Our Saviour also said of Himself: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart: and you shall find rest for your souls" (St. Matt. xi. 29).

3. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

They are those who feel a real inward sorrow for their own sins and the sins of others, and do not take part in the sinful amusements of this world. We find an example of a mourning soul in St. Mary Magdalen, the penitent, who bathed the feet of Our Saviour with her tears (St. Luke vii. 38). These mourners shall be comforted, *i.e.*, they shall obtain pardon, full reconciliation with God, and the eternal joys of heaven. "By a short-lived laugh we buy eternal tears," says St. Peter Damian; "and by a moment of weeping we earn eternal joys."

4. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill."

The hungry and thirsty are those who have a holy zeal for promoting the honor of God to the best of their power, who oppose evil in this world, who protect their neighbor against injustice, and have a desire to hear the word of God and to practise it. "The just man," says St. Bernard, "hunger and thirsts unceasingly after justice, so that

the longer he lives the more he desires to grow just, for he endeavors at all times to rise from good to better."

The hungry and thirsty shall have their fill, *i.e.* they shall be filled with bliss on the day when the glory of God shall be manifest, as the Psalmist says: "I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear" (Ps. xvi. 15).

5. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

Merciful are all those who feel a hearty compassion for the misery of their brethren, and are firmly resolved to help them for the love of God. St. John Chrysostom says that by this virtue we become like unto God, of whom we are told that He is merciful.

A model of this virtue is found in Tabitha, whom St. Peter met at Joppe. She was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. She died and her body was laid out in an upper chamber. As St. Peter was at Lydda near to Joppe at the time, the disciples sent for him. And when he had come, they led him to the upper chamber: and all the widows stood about him weeping, and showing him the coats and garments which Dorcas (Tabitha) had made. And Peter called her back to life by his word (Acts ix. 36-41).

6. "Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God."

Those are clean of heart who not only refrain from doing evil, but who subdue all evil inclinations and desires in themselves. They are capable even here below of understanding divine mysteries, and in the future life they shall see God in a special light of glory.

Examples of such pure souls are the hundred and forty-four thousand who sing before the throne of God a new canticle which nobody else can sing. St. John says of them: "These are they who were not defiled with women: for they are virgins. They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. In their mouth there was found no lie, for they are without spot before the throne of God" (Apoc. xiv. 3-5).

7. "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God."

The peace-makers are those who know nothing of quarrels, strife, and law-suits, from whom peace proceeds, and who spread it around them wherever they go. Theirs shall be the peace of God which surpasseth all understanding (Phil. iv. 7).

We find an example of a peaceable man in the Patriarch Abraham, who, in order to avoid disputes between his own shepherds and those of Lot, left to his nephew the choice of the pasture-land. Like Abraham every Christian ought to say: "Let there be no quarrel, I beseech thee, between me and thee: for we are brethren" (Gen. xiii. 8).

8. "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

These are the chosen ones who for their faith or for other virtues patiently suffer shame and persecution, as, for instance, the holy apostles and martyrs have done.

When the apostles preached the doctrine of Jesus Christ crucified, they were first thrown into prison, then scourged, and forbidden to speak in the name of Jesus. And they went from the presence of the council rejoicing, because they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus (Acts v. 41).

All those suffer persecution for justice' sake who are innocently oppressed and bear it with resignation to the will of God: for instance, servants who refuse to take part in the sins of their fellow-servants or to connive at them. Moreover, those who are mocked and laughed at for their Catholic principles, or are dismissed from their place because they will not give up the practice of their religion; or those persons who see that they are not promoted because of their religious convictions and remain true to them, although their families may have to suffer want in consequence. To these and to all others who suffer similar hardships, the following words are addressed: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and

“speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for My sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven” (St. Matt. v. 11, 12).

THE WAY OF ATTAINING PERFECTION.

In order to obtain the grace that the Spirit of God may rouse us to aspire to perfection, and strengthen us bravely to fight the good fight against the world and its temptations, and to persevere in this good will and in this strength which He Himself has given us, it is necessary above all things that we should pray with our whole heart, that we should not leave off from prayer, that we should be watchful and often receive the sacraments, those greatest means of grace, which the Church offers us. For many have begun in the spirit and have ended in the flesh. Even King Solomon, to whom God had given such wonderful understanding that he was wiser than all men (3 Kings iv. 31), fell into idolatry in his old age, because he allowed himself to be seduced by heathen women (3 Kings xi. 7, 8). Therefore let every one remember that not a good beginning only, but perseverance to the end, works salvation. “Be thou faithful unto death: and I will give thee the crown of life” (Apoc. ii. 10).

Application.

1. We are highly blessed, because the Lord has promised not only eternal life to us, but has shown us so clearly how to gain it. We need therefore not walk in the dark and anxiously ask ourselves: Shall we ever attain our goal? for we see the whole Christian life represented in grand pictures in the life of Jesus Christ and of His saints, and in the beatitudes which Our Lord pronounced. We have only to compare our life with these pictures, and we shall know whether we are animated by the spirit of the world or by the spirit of Jesus Christ.

2. As the teaching we have received is so clear, we have only to ask ourselves in all our doubts: What would the apostles and the disciples of Christ have done if they had been in our position? Then we shall understand that many things which appear lawful at first sight war against the spirit of Christ, and not only are not conducive to salvation, but lead in an entirely opposite direction. But there is a test which will never deceive us: the following of Christ reflected in the lives of the saints is a glass into which we ought to look very often, for in it we can read truth.

3. Although we cannot attain perfect happiness in this life, even the striving after eternal happiness in the next is rewarded with numerous spiritual

blessings here below; for those who seek the kingdom of God shake themselves free from all those fatal passions which disturb the peace of the human heart, and avoid many toils and troubles which others have to suffer in their chase after the pleasures of this world. It has not been said in vain: "Godliness is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come" (1 Tim. iv. 8).

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